# LETTERS

Upon several

# OCCASIONS:

Written by and between

Mr. *Dryden*, Mr. *Congreve*,
Mr. *Wycherly*, and
Mr. ——— Mr. *Dennis*.

Published by Mr. DENNIS.

With a New Translation of Select
LETTERS of *Monsieur Voiture*.

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To the Right Honourable

*Charles Montague*, Esq;

One of the Lords of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer; and one of His Majesties most Honourable Privy Council.

*SIR*,

AS soon as I had resolv'd to make this Address to you, that the Present might not be altogether unworthy of you, I took care to obtain the Consent of my Friends to publish some Letters, which they had writ as Answers to mine.

When I look upon my self, I find I have reason to beg pardon for my

Presumption: But when I consider those Gentlemen, I am encourag'd to hope that you will not be offended to find your self at the Head of no Vulgar Company, a Company, whose Names and Desert are universally known, a Company rais'd far above the level of Mankind by their own extraordinary Merit, and yet proud to do Homage to yours. They are Gentlemen, 'tis true, who are divided in their Interests, and who differ in their Politick Principles, but they agree in their Judgments of Things, which all the World admires, and they always consent when they speak of you.

In presenting this little *Book* to you, I only design'd to shew my Zeal and my Gratitude, but they assure me unanimously, that I have likewise shewn my Judgment. Tho indeed, Sir, the number of the Great, who

cast

cast a favourable Eye upon Human Learning, is not so considerable, but that a Man who would Address any thing of this nature to one of them, may soon determine his choice. Proficients in other Arts are encouraged by Profit, which is their main Design, but he who bestows all his time upon Human Studies is incited by Glory alone, and the World takes care that he should have no more than he seeks for. The Enthusiast, the Quack, the Pettifogger, are rewarded for Torturing, and for deluding Men; but Humanity has met with very barbarous Usage, only for pleasing, and for instructing them. The very Court, which draws most of its Ornament from it, has but too often neglected it; there Learning in general has been disregarded: For none but great Souls are capable of great Designs, and few Courtiers

have had Greatness of Mind enough to procure the Promotion of Science, which is the Exaltation of Human Nature, and the Enlargement of the Empire of Reason. Our Ministers of State have formerly behaved themselves with so much indifference, as if it would have lessen'd them to have taken any care of Letters. They have shewn themselves as perfectly unconcern'd, as if not one had discover'd, that at a time when our Neighbors are grown so knowing, the Publick Safety depends on the Progress of Learning, and that to Patronize Science, is to take care of the State. Besides, too many of our States-men have been engag'd in unjust Designs. Most of our Politicians have done their endeavour to encroach on the Crown, or to attempt on the People. Few have had Capacity and Integrity enough

to keep the Balance ſo ſteady, as to maintain Prerogative at once, and aſſert Privilege; to ſerve the King Zealouſly, and their Country Faithfully; to poſſeſs at the ſame time the Favour of the one, and the Hearts of the other, to ſuch a degree as to be courted by the People to ſerve as their Repreſentative, at the very time that they are employ'd by the King in Matters of the higheſt Importance. Inſtead of that, moſt of them have had reaſon to be afraid of the King or the Commons; and Men who have been ſollicitous for their own Safety have ſeldom appear'd concern'd for the good of others. Few then have been and are in a Condition to be Protectors of Learning, and therefore thoſe happy few deſerve all the Honours which we are able to pay them. Of thoſe, *Sir*, you appear in the foremoſt Rank,

and are to the Common-wealth of Learning what you are to the State, a great Defence and a shining Ornament. You have warmly encouraged all sorts of Studies, but have been justly and nobly partial to those, for which the State has made no Provision: Which is enough to gain you the Esteem of all who have any regard for Learning, and to win the very Souls of all who, *like me*, are charm'd with the softer Studies of Humanity. For which your Zeal has been so diffusive, that it has extended it self even to me, tho' a bare Inclination to cultivate Eloquence and Poetry, was the only thing which could recommend me to you. Yet even this has been encourag'd by the promise of your Protection and by the Humanity of your receiving me. The access which I have had to you, has been the greatest

eſt Obligation that you could lay upon a Man who has ſtill valu'd Merit above all the World, and who has ſought his Improvement more than he has his Advancement. When I have at any time approach'd you, I have found in you none of thoſe forbidding Qualities, of which they accuſe the Great. Inſtead of thoſe, I have found an attractive and a human Greatneſs, the generous Sincerity of the Man of Honour join'd with the Grace and Complaiſance of the Courtier, and a Deportment noble without Pride, and Modeſt without deſcending. Nature has made me ſomething averſe from making my Court to *Fortune*. But I am proud to attend upon real Greatneſs, and to wait upon you ſince firſt you encouraged me, has been at once my Duty and my Ambition.

The

The Permission which you gave me to approach you, was so great an Incitement to me, that I believe it might have brought me to write well if I had not a very just reason to resolve to attempt it no more. You had given me one great Encouragement before I had the Honour to see you, and that was, by leaving off Writing your self. For Vanity is a greater Incitement to Poets than Pensions, and even Want depresses the Spirits less than the thought of being surpassed. Therefore while Mr. *Montague* Sung, he Sung alone. We admir'd indeed our Conquering Monarch, but we admir'd in silence. We rever'd the Greatness of your Genius, and neglected our Talents. Indeed the strength and sweetness of your Voice was fit to charm us alone, and we who followed, were only fit for the *Chorus*. But you have left a Province,

vince, which you have made your own, to the Adminſtration of thoſe who are under you, and are gone on in your victorious Progreſs to the Acquiſition of new Glory. From which I am ſenſible that I detract by detaining you. For your Actions are your beſt Encomiums, and the loud conſent of the Nation your beſt Panegyrick. It was a glorious one that was ſpoken to you by the People of *Weſtminſter* in the requeſt that they made to you to ſerve as their Member in the preſent Parliament; at a time when they were Caballing all over the Kingdom, and Gentlemen were depriving Peaſants of their little Reaſon, in order to obtain their Voices, Mr. *Montague*'s Merit, while he was ſilent, ſollicited for him ſo importunately, that it prevail'd upon a number of conſiderable Inhabitants of the Politer

parts

parts of the Town, to come and make it their humble Request to you, to Honour them by Representing them, which puts me in mind of a Saying of *De la Bruiere*, *That the People are then at their height of Happiness, when their King makes Choice for his Confidents, and for his Ministers, of the very same Persons that the People would have chosen, if the Choice had been in their power.* This, at present, is our own Case; for doubtless the same People, who, without any Brigue or the least Corruption, came voluntarily to entreat you to suffer them to place you in the Great Council of the Kingdom, would, if the Choice had been in their power, have plac'd you in the Privy-Council; and they who frankly offer'd to trust you with the disposal of the Mony which is in their Houses, would have trusted you,

had

had it been in their power, with the Intendency of that in the Treaſury. So that the Peoples proffer to Chuſe you, ſeems to me to be a loud Approbation of the Choice, which the King had made before of you, and of your Miniſtration upon that Choice. But I injure the Publick while I detain you. Yet give me leave to end with my Zealous Wiſhes for you, that the Happineſs may be multiplied on you, which you ſo nobly ſeek to communicate, that you may encreaſe in Riches and Honours faſter than you advance in Years, till you arrive at that height of Proſperity which may be anſwerable to your high Deſert, and till Fortune may be ſaid to pour down her Gifts upon you, in Emulation of *Art* and *Nature*: Yet Envy after all ſhall be forced to declare, that Mr. *Montague* ſprung

from

from an Illustrious Stock, and loaded with Plenty and Honours, is yet nobler by Desert, than he is by Descent, and greater by Virtue than he is by Fortune;

*I am Sir,*

*Your most Humble*

*And most Obedient Servant,*

John Dennis.

# To the READER.

I Once resolved to have a long Preface before this little Book; but the Impression has been so long retarded by the Fault of those who had the care of it, that I have now neither Time nor Humour to execute what I intended. I shall therefore only give a Compendious Account of what I proposed to have treated of more at large. I designed in the first place to have said something of the Nature and of the end of a Letter, and thought to have prov'd that the Invention of it was to supply Conversation, and not to imitate it, for that nothing but the Dialogue was capable of doing that; from whence I had drawn this Conclusion, that the Style of a Letter was neither to come quite up to that of Conversation, nor yet to keep at too great a distance from it. After that, I determined to shew that all Conversation is not familiar; that it may be Ceremonious, that it may be Grave, nay, that it may be Sublime, or that Tragedy must be allow'd to be out of Nature: That if the Sublime were easy and unconstrain'd, it might be as consistent with the Epistolary Style, as it was with the Didactique, that Voiture had admirably joyn'd it with one of them, and Longinus with both. After this, I resolv'd to have said something of those who had most succeeded in Letters amongst the Ancients and Moderns, and to have treated of their Excellencies and their Defects: To have spoken more particularly of Cicero and Pliny amongst the Ancients, and amongst the Moderns of Balzac and Voiture; to have shewn that Cicero is too simple, and too dry, and that Pliny is too affected, and too refined, that one of them has too much of Art in him, and that both of them have too little of Nature. That the Elevation of Balzac was frequently forced and

and his Sublime affected; that his Thoughts were often above his Subject, and his Expression almost always above his Thoughts; and that whatsoever his Subjects were, his Style was seldom alter'd; that Voiture was easy and unconstrain'd, and natural when he was most exalted, that he seldom endeavoured to be witty at the expence of right Reason: But that as his Thoughts were for the most part true and just, his Expression was often defective, and that his Style was too little diversifyed. That for my own part, as I came infinitely short of the extraordinary Qualities of these great Men, I thought my self obliged to endeavour the rather to avoid their Faults; and that consequently I had taken all the care that I could, not to think out of Nature and good Sense, and neither to force nor neglect my Expression; and that I had always taken care to suit my Style to my Subject, whether it was Familiar or Sublime, or Didactique; and and that I had more or less varied it in every Letter. All this and more I designed to have said at large; which I have only hinted now in a hurry. I have nothing to add but to desire the Reader to excuse my bad Performance, upon the account of my good Endeavour, and for striving to do well in a manner of Writing, which is at all times useful, and at this Time necessary; a manner in which the English would surpass both the Ancients and Moderns, if they would but cultivate it for the very same Reasons that they have surpassed them in Comedy. But methinks, I have a Title to the Readers Favour, for I have more than made amends for the defects of my own Letters, by entertaining him with those of my Friends.

A

# A COLLECTION OF LETTERS,

Written by ſeveral Eminent Hands.

## *To* Walter Moyle, *Eſq;*

*Dear Sir,*

YOU know that a Grave Fellow aſſures us, that upon the Ceſſation of Oracles, Lamentable Crys were heard in the Air, proclaiming along the Coaſts the Death of the Great *Pan*: And have not you upon this dearth of good Senſe, and this Ceſſation of Wit? tell me truly; have not you heard

*Theſe ſounds upon the Corniſh Shore,*
*The Sage,* Will E — *is no more.*

Gone is the Univerſal Lord of Wit! He

to whom all the Wits paid Homage; For whom his Subjects set a Tax upon Words, and laid exorbitant Customs on Thoughts. He's Dead, alas, He's Dead!

Dead I mean, Sir, in a Legal Capacity, that is, Out-law'd and gone into the *Fryars*; to go into which is once more to Out-law himself. He has done it Sir, and and ill Fortune has brought him to be a *Felo de se* that way. For since the Law thought it but Just to put *Will* out of its Protection, *Will* thought it but prudent to put himself out of its Power. And since the Law could use him with so much Contempt, as to declare to all the World that it does not care for *Will E— y Will*, who is extreamly stout in Adversity, has declar'd by his Actions that he does not care for the Law. *Virgil* tells us in his Sixth Book, that the Souls in Hell were busied about the same things in which they were employed upon Earth; Even so does Sage *Will* use the same Nutmeg-Grater, and the same Tea-Pot in the *Fryars*, that he handled before in *Bow-street*. Thus has he left the Wits, without any sorrow, tho he loves them, and without taking any leave of them. For *Will* thinks they cannot be long from him, and he says, he expects that in a very little time his Old Company should be constant

at

at his New House. And dost not thou think that they too have reason to expect the very same thing. For as the Death of any Man ought to put all his Friends in mind, that he went before but to lead them the way; so *Will's* departure from this Miserable Life, this lewd *Covent-Garden*-Life, and his Ferrying from *Somerset-stairs* to the Infernal Shore of *Alsatia*, should be a *Memento* to the rest of the Wits, that he is but gone whither they all must follow.

To leave off Poetical Similies, this Body-Politick is in a Cursed Condition; and cannot keep long together without a Head. The Members are at present in a Grave Debate how to get one. To morrow the Whole House will resolve it self into a Grand Committee, to consult about Ways and Means of making Provision for the Common Necessities. Some talk of an Excise upon *May-Dew*, and *Rasberry-Brandy*: That there will be a Poll is strongly asserted, in which every Man is to pay according to his respective condition. To morrow it will be known to how much each Man's *Quota* amounts. As for Example; How much a Poet is to Pay, how much a Wit, how much a Politician, and how much a Critick. A Critick did I say? I beg your pardon. They have voted *Nemine Contradicente*,

*dicente*, that they will cess no Critick till Mr. *Moyle* returns.

I have given them my Sentiments upon the fore-mentioned Poll, which were, That it was something hard to make a Man pay for being call'd, Wit, Poet, or Critick; That they saw by Experience lately in the State, that Poor Dogs grumbled to pay for their Titles. How then could they think that People would be contented to be Tax'd for their Nick-Names? That in setling this Tax they were to take a quite contrary Method, to that which was taken upon Setling a Tax in the State. That in the State, sometimes a Man paid for what he really had; As for Example, when a Country Squire paid for his Land or his Money; and sometimes for what he really had not, as when a Cit that is twice dub'd, Knight by the King, and Cuckold by his Wife, pays for his Honour, and for his Children. The first of which is but as it were his, for it is really the Kings; and the Second of which are but as it were his, for they are really the Courtiers who help'd him to his Title. In the State too a Man is made to pay for something which he does, or for something which he does not. As a *Jacobite* pays so much for Swearing when he's Drunk, and so much more for not Swearing

ing when he's Sober. But that in our case, if we would be exactly Just, we should make People pay neither for what they have, nor for what they have not; nor for what they do, nor for what they do not; But should oblige them to Pay only for pretending to have what they really have not, or for offering to do, what they are utterly incapable of doing. That thus the Tax would certainly fall upon the most Solvent Part of the Body. For how ridiculous would it be to Tax a Man for having Poetry and Wit, when they are almost always signs, that he has not a Farthing to Pay? On the other side how absurd would it be to Tax him for a bare want of those Qualities? since when a Man is Dull without pretending, 'tis ten to one but he is Poor, for Riches make Men Vain, and Vanity makes them Affected. But he who is not much at his Ease, is hardly at leisure for Affectation, and I have often seen, that when Vanity has thrown a Fop out of Nature, necessity has brought him back again: But a Rich Rogue will be sure to be always pretending. Fortune takes pleasure in making those Vain, whom Nature before made Impotent, and both of them often conspire to finish a Coxcomb. Thus I would have none Pay, but they who put

Gravity upon us for Wisdom, Visions for Politicks, and Quibbles for Wit; and I would have no Man at any Expence for being call'd a Poet, a Wit, or a Critick, unless it be by himself. It would be equally hard to lay a Tax upon any one, for his ill Fortune, or for his ill Nature, since they are things of which no Man is Master. But what? A Sot cannot help his Vanity. Agreed. But then it makes him so much happier than he deserves to be, that he may well be contented to Pay for it.

*From Wills that was.*
Nov. 5. 1695.

*I am*

*Your most humble*

*Servant,*

John Dennis.

To

## *To Mr.* Wycherly *at* Cleve *near* Shrewsbury.

*Sir*,

WHile I venture to write these Lines to you, I take it to be my Interest not to consider you, as I hitherto always have done, and as for the future I always shall do, as Mr. *Wycherly*, as the greatest Comick Wit that ever *England* bred, as a Man sent purposely into the World, to Charm the Ears of the Wittiest Men, and to Ravish the Hearts of the most Beautiful Women: No, Sir, that in writing to you I may assume some Spirit, I shall at present only consider you as the Humble Hermit at *Cleve*; Humble even in the full Possession of all those extraordinary Qualities, the knowledge of which has made me Proud. I must confess, that I have no great Opinion of that which Men generally call Humility. Humility in most Men is want of Heat; 'tis Phlegm, 'tis Impotence, 'tis a Wretched Necessity, of which, they who lye under it, vainly endeavour to make a Virtue. But in a Man of Mr. *Wycherly*'s

make, 'tis Choice, 'tis Force of Mind, 'tis a Good, 'tis a Generous Condeſcenſion. And what Force of Mind is there not requiſite to bend back a Soul by perpetual Reflection, which would be always Riſing, and eternally Aſpiring by virtue of its inborn Fire? Yet yours, notwithſtanding all its Power, cannot wholly depreſs its ſelf, nor deſcend in every part of it. At the time that your Will vouchſafes to ſtoop, your Underſtanding ſoars, your Writings are as bold as your Converſation is Modeſt, (though thoſe are bold, as this is Modeſt with Judgment) and he who would do you Juſtice, muſt needs confeſs that you are a very Ambitious Writer, though a very Humble Man. Yet your very Ambition has oblig'd Mankind: It has exalted Humane Nature, in raiſing your own by its moſt noble Efforts; and that without boaſting Preheminence. And ſurely it muſt be for this very reaſon that we feel a Secret Pride, when we but read the Diſcoveries which you have made. Thus I cannot ſay that you are without Vanity, for never was Man exempt from it; but I can ſay, that you have made uſe even of Vanity to humble you by way of Reflection, and that you have avoided that dangerous Effect of it, Vain-Glory, the Rock upon which ſe-

veral

several great Wits before you have been seen to split. For you have always wisely considered, that Vain-Glory in the Vulgar may be Supportable, nay may be Diverting; but that in great Men it must be Intollerable. That whereas in the First 'tis want of Discernment, 'tis Folly, 'tis the Extravagant Blindness of Self-Love; in the Last, 'tis Crime, 'tis Malice, 'tis a Secret and Proud Design to Mortifie and Insult over the rest of Men, over whom they have so much advantage; That it is for this very reason, that we so deeply resent and so severely revenge the Mortal Affronts we receive from it. Great Wits were by Heaven predestin'd to rule, to rule the Minds of others, the Noblest Empire; but when they grow outwardly Vain they grow Tyrants, and then their discontented Subjects rebell, and then they depose those Kings as Usurpers, whom before they Obey'd as their Lawful Monarchs. But a Moderate, a Good, and a Gracious Prince, like you, commands their Hearts as well as their Understandings, and under one whom they love so well, they grow as Proud, as they are pleas'd to Obey. Our violent Inclinations make us belong to you, and therefore 'tis the Interest even of our Pride, that you should long continue in the

place

place which your extraordinary desert has attain'd. Did we nothing but esteem you as much as we do, we should certainly envy you, if we did not hate you; for bare esteem is always forc'd upon us, whereas Inclination is much more Voluntary; Besides, as a Judicious Frenchman observes, Esteem is Foreign, and comes from Abroad, and is therefore received with Grumbling, but Inclination is our own and born in our Breasts, and is therefore Caress'd and Cherish'd. I might add, that upon this account, it is hard to wish well to those whom we very much esteem, if they have not likewise the Skill to make themselves be belov'd; because barely to esteem depresses the Spirits, as much as to love very much exalts them, it brings the Soul to a Languid Temper, and gives it at once too horrid Views of anothers Excellencies, and of its own Infirmities; but Affection gives it Agitation and Warmth; and in the View of a Friend's defect, it takes too much pleasure, and too much pride to consider its own Defects. 'Tis true, that you are esteemed at this high rate, you owe to your Wit and your Penetration; but that you are esteem'd without Envy, that you are with Joy and Gladness esteem'd, you owe to this, that while the force of your Fancy and Judg-

ment

merit makes all the World admire you, you remain your self unmov'd by it; that while your Excellence fills all mouths but yours, you alone appear to be unacquainted with it. Thus while by the Merit of your extraordinary Qualities, you are known to surpass all others, it plainly appears that you have beyond all this a Greatness of Soul, from whence you look down on your own Merit. An infallible sign that the Talents which we admire in you are no imaginations, but real things, things that were born with you, and have been improv'd by you, and which you have not acquir'd. For Men are found to be Vainer, upon the account of those Qualities which they fondly believe they have, than of those which they really have; and Hereditary Greatness gives Men leave to be humble, whereas Preferment occasions Pride. None but such real Greatness as yours can Capacitate a Man to be truly humble; for the Soul which by Nature is not seated High, can hardly be said to Descend. If I have insisted too long on this shining Subject, a Subject which is so conspicuous in you; if you look upon this tedious Letter, as one of those various Persecutions which every eminent Virtue provokes; I desire you to consider, that I have so many obligations

to this very Humility, that I look'd upon my self as oblig'd by gratitude to say as much as I have done. For to that I owe the happiness which I have frequently received in your Conversation; to that I owe the present Satisfaction which your Permission to write to you gives me; and to that I am indebted for the Hopes of your Answers; when I have received them I shall then believe what you were pleas'd to tell me when I saw you last, that you are much more Humble in the Clear Air on your Mountain at *Cleve*, than when you are in Fog and Sulphurous Smoke in *Bow-street*. But at the same time, the Satisfaction of thinking that Distance does not make you forget me, will render him very proud, who is at present,

*Sir*,

*London*, *Jan.* 19. 169½. *Your very Humble Servant.*

John Dennis.

*Copy*

## *Mr.* Wycherly's *Answer to* Mr. Dennis.

Dear Sir,

YOU have found a way to make me satisfyed with my absence from *London*, nay, what is more, with the distance which is now betwixt you and me. That indeed uses to lessen Friendship, but gives me the greater Mark of yours by your kind Letter, which I had miss'd if I had been nearer to you: So that I, who receive no Rents here, yet must own if I did, I cou'd not receive greater Satisfaction than I had from yours, worth even a Letter of Exchange, or Letters Pattents; For I value your Friendship more than Money, and am Prouder of your Approbation than I should be of Titles; For the having the good opinion of one who knows mankind so well, argues some merit in me, upon which every man ought to consider himself more, than upon the goods of Fortune.

I had rather be thought your Friend in proof of my Judgment and good Sense, than a Friend to the Muses; and had rather have you than them thought mine. If I am as you say, at once Proud and Humble, tis since I have known I have had the honour to please you; tho your praise rather humbles than makes me (tho a damn'd Poet) more vain. For it is so great, that it rather seems the Railery of a witty Man, than the Sincerity of a Friend; and rather proves the Copiousness of your own Invention, than justifies the Fertility of mine. But I fear I am forfeiting the Character of the Plain-dealer with you; and seem like vain Women or vainer Men, to refuse praise, but to get more; and so by returning your Compliments, shew my self grateful out of Interest, as Knaves are punctual in some payments, but to augment their Credit. And for your Praise of my Humility, (the only mark of my Knowledge, since it is a mark of my knowing my self.) you have prais'd that to its Destruction, and have given me so much, you have left me none. Like those Admirers who praise a young Maids Modesty till they deprive her of it. But let me tell you, tis not to my humility that you owe my Friendship, but to my Ambition, since I can have no greater than

to

to be esteem'd by you, and the World, your Friend, and to be known to all Mankind for,

*Dear Sir,*

*Your humble Servant,*

*W. Wycherley.*

*Postscript.*

My Dear Friend, I have no way to show my Love to you in my Absence, but by my Jealousie. I would not have my Rivals in your Friendship the *C—s*, the *D—s*, the *W—s*, and the rest of your Tavern Friends enjoy your conversation while I cannot; Tho I confess, 'tis to their interest to make you dumb with Wine, that they may be heard in your company; tho' it were more the Demonstration of their wit to hear you, than to be heard by you. For my own part, I am Ambitious of your Company alone in some Solitude, where you and I might be all one.

For I am sure if I can pretend to any Sence, I can have no Instruction or Satisfaction of Life, better than your example and your Society.

My Service pray, to all my Friends, that is, to all yours whom I know, and be charitable

table (as often as you can) to the absent; which you good Wits seldom are; I mean be charitable with your Letters to

*Your humble Servants.*

*Postscript.*

Pray let me have more of your Letters, thô they should rally me with Compliments undeserv'd as your last has done; for like a Countrey Esquire I am in love with a Town Wit's Conversation, thô it be but at a Distance that I am forced to have it, and thô it abuses me while I enjoy it.

*From* Cleve *near* Shrewsbury
February *the* 4th 169$\frac{3}{4}$.

## *To Mr. Wycherly.*

*Dear Sir,*

NOT long after I writ my last to you, I was hurried up to Town by a kind of a Cholick, which has ended in a Defluction upon one of my Feet. You know Sir, a Defluction is a general name which some pleasant Frenchmen have given an infant Gout, too young to be yet Baptiz'd. But tho' the distemper rag'd in each hand, I would in spight of it, answer your admirable Letter, a Letter which I had certainly known to be yours, tho it had been sent me without a name, nay and transcrib'd by a Chancery Clerk in his own hideous manner of Copying. But I must confess I was surpriz'd to hear you say in it, that you took the sincerity of a man who so much esteems you for Raillery, yet tho you declare it, you can never believe it. I am willing to believe you exceeding humble, but you can never be humble to that Degree, unless your Mind which resembles your Eye, in

its Clearneſs, its Livelineſs, and in its piercing Views, ſhould be alſo like it in this, that plainly diſcerning all things elſe, it wants a ſight of it ſelf; but in this it does not reſemble it: For it beholds it ſelf by Reflections, and like a lovely Maid at her Glaſs, is Charm'd with the ſight of its own Beauty. This is a ſight in which you take Pride as well as Pleaſure; but yours I muſt confeſs is a guiltleſs Pride, it being nothing but firſt motion, which it is impoſſible for Man to avoid. You have both the Force to ſubdue it immediately, and the Art and Goodneſs to Conceal it from us. Thus it plainly appears from what I have ſaid, that you do not believe I had any deſign to rally you. I am confident that through all my Letter there appears an Air of Sincerity. But that is a Virtue which has been ſo long and ſo peculiarly yours, that you may perhaps be jealous of it in your Friends, and diſclaim ſome Virtues which they commend in you only to Monopoliſe that. You had given me, at leaſt an occaſion to think ſo, if the Railery in yours had not been ſo very apparent, that even I had Eyes to diſcern that you have been to blame in it, tho I am doubly blinded with Love of you and my ſelf. Yet if you writ it with a deſign to Mortifie me, aſſure your ſelf that I

ſhall

shall fortifie my Vanity with that very Artillery with which you have begun to attack it. If Mr. *Wycherly* rallies, me it is certain that I have my defects; but it is full as certain, that he would never condescend to abuse me at such a distance if he wholly despis'd me. Thus, Sir, you see I am as reasonable with my Friend, as a *Russian* spouse is with her Husband, and take his very Railery for a mark of Esteem, as she does a Beating for a proof of Affection. The very worst of your Qualities gain our Affections. Even your Jealousie is very obliging, which it could never be unless it were very groundless. But since your very Suspicion is obliging, what influence must your kindness have on our Souls? The wish that I were with you in some Retirement, is engaging to that degree, that I almost repent that I so eagerly desir'd your Conversation before. For if it were possible I would augment that desire as a grateful return to yours. To be with you in Solitude would make me perfectly happy. Tho it were in the Orcades, I would not wish my self remov'd to any happier Climate; no, not even to that which contain'd my absent Mistress; all that I could do for her on that occasion, would be to wish her with me. In that Retirement, what

ſhould I not enjoy? Where I ſhould be admirably inſtructed without trouble, and infinitely delighted without Vice, where I ſhould be glorious at once with Envy and Quiet. For what could be more glorious, than to be the Companion of your retreat; My very Ambition inſtructs me to love ſuch Solitude. Tho properly ſpeaking, there can be no Solitude where you reſide. Immortal Company ſtill attends you, and the Virtues, the Graces, and the Charming Nine who love the Groves, and are fond of you, follow you to remoteſt Retirements. The comick Muſe is more particularly yours; and it is your peculiar praiſe to allure the moſt raviſhing of all the Siſters after you into Retirement. To make that Goddeſs forſake the crowd with you, who loves it moſt of the Nine. You have been conſtantly her Darling, her beſt belov'd. Thus in Retirement with her and you, I ſhould have the Converſation of Mankind; I ſhould enjoy it with all its Advantages, without its leaſt inconveniencies. In the Philoſophy of your Actions and Words, I ſhould ſee the Wiſe, the Good, and the truly Great; in your obſervations, and in your railery, the Men of Senſe, and the Men of Wit; and in your Satyr ſeverely pleaſant, the Fools and Raſcals expos'd by

it.

it. In the Postscript to my last, I made an Apology for usurping a Style so Foreign from this way of writing. I have once more run into the same fault in this, but the very thought of Mr. *Wycherly* spreads a generous warmth through me, and raises my Soul to rapture. And when a Man writes, his Soul and his Style of necessity rise together. In my next I have something with which I must trouble you, that will require another manner of writing.

*I am &c.*

*London, Feb.* 17.

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## *To Mr.* Wycherly.

*Dear Sir,*

I Have been very ill ever ſince I took my leave of you, ſo that I parted in one Night from all that I value moſt, that is, from my Health and You. However, Nature was kind in not failing to ſupply me with Vigour, till Fortune had depriv'd me of your Converſation, and I was got amongſt People with whom I have ſmall occaſion for Vigour. Yet even here in ſpight of Sickneſs and Abſence I have made a ſhift to converſe with you: For I thought that your Works were the only things that could make me full amends for the loſs of your Company. By them you have been able to give me Joy even in the midſt of my Pain. For, the *Country Wife*, and the *Plain Dealer* are ſtores of Delight, which you have laid up by a Noble Charity, to ſupply the Poor in Spirit thrô all Poſterity. So that I bel eve that to be one of the Reaſons of Fortune's Pique to you, that you have put it out of her power for the time to come, to proſecute her Quarrel to Men of Senſe effectually. For by having re-

courſe

course to you in your Works, they are sure to become more happy than Fools, even at the time when they are less successful. But I can hold up my Head no longer at present, as soon as I am better you may expect a longer Letter from me.

*I am* Yours, &c.

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## To Mr. Dennis.

*Dear Sir,*

I Have received yours of the 20th of *November*, and am glad to find by it, that however your Friends are losers by your Absence from the Town, you are a Gainer by it; of your Health, which every one you have left behind you, (but *Ch*——) may be thought a Friend to; and the more each Man is your Friend, the more he is satisfy'd with your Absence, which tho it makes us Ill for want of you, makes you well for want of us: your taking no leave of me (which you would excuse) I take to be one of the greatest Kindnesses you ever shew'd me; for I could no more see a Departing Friend from the Town, than a Departing Friend from this Life; and sure 'tis as much kindness and good breeding to steal from our Friend's Society unknown to 'em, (when we must leave 'em to their Trouble) as it is to steal out of a Room, after a Ceremonious Visit, to prevent trouble to him, whom we would Oblige and Respect; so that your last Fault (as you call it) is like the rest of your

Faults

Faults rather an Obligation than an Offence, tho the greatest Injury indeed you can do your Friends, is to leave 'em against their Will, which you must needs do. You tell me you converse with me in my Writings, I must confess then you suffer a great deal for me in my Absence, which (tho I would have you love me) I would not have you do; but for your truer Diversion, pray change my *Country-Wife* for a better of your own in the Country, and exercise your own Plain-Dealing there, then you will make your Country Squire better Company, and your Parson more sincere in in your Company than his Pulpit, or in his Cups; But when you talk of Store of Delights you find in my *Plain-Dealer*, you cease to be one; and when you commend my *Country-Wife*, you never were more a Courtier; and I doubt not but you will like your next Neighbour's Country Wife better than you do mine, that you may pass your time better than you can do with my *Country-Wife*; and like her Innocence more than her Wit, since Innocence is the better Bawd to Love; but enjoy my Wife and welcome in my Absence, I shall take it as civilly as a City Cuckold; I was sorry to find by you that your head ak'd whilst you writ me your Letter. Since I fear 'twas

from

from reading my Works (as you call them) not from your own Writing, which never gave you Pain, tho it would to others to imitate it, I've given your Service to your Friends at the *Rose*, who since your absence own they ought not to go for the Witty Club, nor is *Will's* the Wits Coffee House any more, since you left it, whose Society for want of yours is grown as Melancholly, that is as dull as when you left 'em a Nights, to their own Mother-Wit, their Puns, Couplets, or Quibbles; therefore expect not a Witty Letter from any of them, no more than from me, since they, nor I have conversed with you these three Weeks. I have no News worth sending you, but my next shall bring you what we have; in the mean time let me tell you (what I hope is no News to you) that your Absence is more tedious to me, than a Quibbler's Company to you; so that I being sick yesterday, as I thought without any cause, reflected you were Forty or Fifty Miles off, and then found the reason of my Indisposition, for I cannot be well so far from you, who am

*My Dear Mr.* Dennis

*Your obliged humble Servant,*

*W. Wycherly.*

*London, Dec.* 1. 94.

*Post-*

*Postscript.*

Pray pardon me that I have not sooner answer'd your Letter, for I have been very busie this last Week about Law Affairs, that is, very Dull and Idle, tho very Active. Your Friends of the Coffee-House and the *Rose*, whether Drunk or Sober, Good Fellows or Good Wits, show at least their Sense, by valuing you and yours, and send you all their Service; and never are more Wits, and less Poets, that is, less Lyars, than when they profess themselves your Servants.

For News, *W*——— lives Soberly, *Ch*——— goes to bed Early; *D'Urfy* sings now like a Poet, that is, without being ask'd: And all the Poets or Wits-at-Wills, since your departure, speak well of the Absent. *Bal*——— says his ill Looks proceed rather for want of your Company, than for having had that of his Mistress; even the Quibblers and Politicians, have no Double-meaning when they speak well of you.

To

## *To Mr.* Wycherly.

*Dear Sir*,

THE ſight of your Letter reviv'd me. It appear'd like the Rays of the New Sun, to one who has Winter'd under the Pole, and brought with it Light, Warmth and Spirit. The Raillery in it was very obliging; for the Luſt of Praiſe is as Powerful with Men, as the Itch of Enjoyment is with Women; and it is as hard for us to think that our Friends ridicule us when they commend our Wit, as it is for them to believe that their Gallants abuſe them when they extol their Beauty. Yet generally in both caſes, whatever is ſaid, is ſaid for the ſatisfaction of him that ſpeaks it. But then, as he delights in Deceiving, the Perſon to whom he ſpeaks is deceiv'd with Pleaſure, and both Parties are ſatisfied. But Mr. *Wycherly* is to be excepted from this general Rule, who commends his Friend for his Friend's ſake. You never are Witty to pleaſe your ſelf, to whom Wit has ſo long been habitual, that you are often hardly mov'd your ſelf when you ſay thoſe admirable things with which we are tranſ-

ported

ported. Not that I am so far betray'd by Vanity, as to take your Compliments at the Foot of the Letter, or to suppose that you believ'd all that you said; but I am willing for your sake to believe that you meant something of it, and that not being without kindness for me, (which is only owing to the Sweetness of your Nature, that is to your Merit, and not to mine;) your Reason, as the Duke *De la Rochefoucaut* says, has been bubbled by your Affection. And here, Sir, I have much the Advantage of you; for when I declare that I have the greatest Opinion in the World of you, none will mistrust my Sincerity, and all will applaud my Discernment; but you cannot express your Zeal at so high a Rate for any Friend, but it must considerably lessen the World's Opinion of your Judgment. But it is Mr. *Wycherly*'s peculiar Praise, never to have shewn want of Judgment in any thing, unless in that only thing in which Error is Honourable. How few are they who are capable of Erring at your Rate!

*Vellem in amicitiâ sic erraremus, & isti*
*Errori virtus nomen posuisset honestum.*

And

And how happy is the Man who has a Friend ſo accompliſh'd, that Error in him is Virtue. I am that Happy Man, and am ſo far exalted by my Happineſs, that I am never leſs humble, than when I Subſcribe my ſelf,

*Dear Sir,*

*Your moſt Humble*

*and Faithful Servant.*

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*Copy*

## *Mr.* Wycherly's *to Mr.*——

*Dear Sir,*

I Have had yours of the 31st of *March*, to which I should sooner have returned an Answer, had I not been forced to take a little turn out of Town; but your Letter to me, brought me not more satisfaction than your last to Mr. *Moyle* gave me disquiet for you. Since by that I find how uneasie you are. Yet know my Friend from one sufficiently experienced in love disasters, that Love is often a kind of losing Loadam, in which the loser is most often the gainer. If you have been deprived of a Mistress, consider you have lost a Wife, and tho you are disappointed of a short satisfaction, you have likewise escaped a tedious vexation, which Matrimony infallibly comes to be, one way or another; so that your Misfortune is an accident which your true Friends should rather Felicitate than Commiserate. You told me in your last

laſt, that you were no more Maſter of your ſelf. Then how ſhould I help rejoycing at the reſtoration of your Liberty? A Man might as reaſonably be ſorry for his Friend's recovery from Madneſs, as for his recovery from Love, (tho for the time a pleaſant Frenzy;) ſo that, your Miſtreſs's Father, has rather been your Doctor than your Enemy. And you ſhould not be angry with him, if he cures you of your love diſtemper, tho by a means a little too violent, for next to his Daughters cure of love, his may prove the beſt; well, pray be not angry, that I can be pleas'd with any thing that can ſo much diſpleaſe you. I own my Friendſhip for you has a little Selfiſhneſs in it, for now you cannot be ſo happy as you wou'd in the Countrey, I hope you will make us as happy as we can be in Town, which we ſhall be as ſoon as we have your company: For know, my Friend, change of Air after a love diſtemper, may be as good as 'tis after a Fever; and therefore make haſt to Town, where a great many Doctors have engaged to compleat your Cure. Your Friends will do any thing to root out the remains of your Paſſion. The witty Club will grow grave to inſtruct you, and the grave Club will grow gay to delight you. *Wh.* will

turn

turn a Philosopher, and I will grow a good fellow, and venture my own health, for the recovery of your good Humour; for I had rather be sick in your Company, than for want of it (who am,

*Dear Sir,*

*Your most unalterable Friend and*

*humble Servant,*

*W. Wycherly.*

*Postscript.*

Pray pardon me for not writing to you before, or rather for writing to you so dully now, which I hope will be my best excuse for my not writing sooner. All your Friends of the Coffee-house are well, and what is no news to you, are in spight of your Absence your constant humble Servants.

*London, April* 11. 1695.

## *To Mr.* Wycherly.

I have a colourable excuſe for my Silence, for when you went out of Town, you gave me the hopes of receiving a Letter from you, as ſoon as you arriv'd at *Cleve*. Beſides, ſince that, I have been a month in *Northamptonſhire*. But the Inclination which I have to converſe with Mr. *Wycherly*, is too violent to receive any check from Punctillo's. But, alas, I was reſtrain'd by too juſt an Impediment. For ever ſince I ſaw you, I have been ſo rackt by a cruel Paſſion, that I have had no power to do any thing but to complain. And your portion of Melancholly is not ſo ſmall, that you have need to be troubled with another Man's Spleen. I would be ſure to communicate my happineſs to my Friend, nay I could be but half happy if I did not communicate it. As in love I never could be pleas'd to a height with my own pleaſure, if I did not find that it added to that of my Miſtreſs. But I ſhould impart my ill humour to my Friend, if I found that it were not in his power to eaſe me, and that it were much in his inclination, with as much Regret, as

I

I should acquaint him with his own ill Fortune, if I were clearly convinc'd that it were not in my power to assist him. You would not advise me to stifle this passion. You are too well acquainted with Love and me to do that. You know that that would be to perswade me to a thing which you are already sensible, that I am very willing and very unable to do. I blush while I show this weakness, but sure there is some force of Mind requir'd to shew some sorts of weakness. You remember the Maxim of the wise Duke; *La meme fermeté qui sert a resister al'amour, Sertaussi queque fois a le rendre violent et durable.* If that be true, I beseech you to believe that this obstinate Lover is a constant Friend too, and unalterably,

*Dear Sir,*

*Your most Humble Servant.*

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## *Mr.* Wycherly's *Letter.*

*Dear Sir,*

I Lately received from you ſo kind, and ſo witty a Reproach for my not writing to you, that I can hardly repent me of my fault, ſince it has been the occaſion of my receiving ſo much ſatisfaction: But you have had a reaſonable excuſe for your ſilence, ſince you ſay I promis'd to write to you firſt, which is very true; and I had kept my promiſe, but for my Conjecture that you could not ſtay ſo long out of *Northamptonſhire*; nor was I it ſeems, miſtaken in that. But be aſſur'd, Dear *Sir*, I think there can be no better End, or Deſign of my writing, than in its procuring me the ſatisfaction of receiving ſomething of yours; eſpecially, ſince I have no other way left me now of converſing with you. But it ſeems, you forbear to relieve me out of Charity, ſince you ſay your trouble was

ſo

ſo great, that you were unwilling to communicate it to me to mine. I ſee your Wit can do any thing, make an omiſſion of a kindneſs a greater obligation, and if you complain but to your Miſtreſs, as wittily as you do to your Friend, I wonder not at her Cruelty, nor that ſhe ſhould take pleaſure to hear you complain ſo long. But, my Friend have a care of complaining to her, with ſo much true Senſe, leſt it ſhould diſparage your true Love; and indeed, that I fear is the only cauſe you are ſuffer'd to complain ſo long, without the ſucceſs which is due to your Merit, Love, and Wit, from one who; you ſay has her ſelf ſo much, which with your Pardon, I ſhall hardly believe, thô you are her Voucher, if ſhe does not do what you wou'd have her, that is, do you and her ſelf Reaſon as faſt as ſhe can; ſince ſhe muſt need believe you a warm and ſincere Lover, as much as I believe you a Zealous and a true Friend. And *I* am ſo well acquainted with Love and you, that I believe no body is able to alter your Love, or adviſe your Reaſon; the one being as Unalterable as the other infallible, and you (for ought I know) are the only Man, who at once can Love and be Wiſe. And to the Wiſe, you know, a word is enough, eſpecially ſince you gave me a caution againſt

oppoſing your paſſion; becauſe it would be in vain. If Love be in you as in other Men, a violent Paſſion, it is therefore a ſhort Frenzy, and ſhould be cur'd like other Diſtempers of that kind, by your Friend's humouring it, rather than oppoſing it. Yet pardon me, if I preſcribe the common remedy of curing one Love with another. But whether you will let me be your Doctor or no, I muſt at leaſt wiſh you well, who am,

*(Dear Sir,)*

*Your moſt Obliged Affectionate Friend, and humble Servant,*

W. Wicherly.

*Poſtſcript.*

Pray thank my Friend Mr. *W*—— for putting his Surtout of a Letter over yours of a finer Stuff, as the lining of a Garment is often finer than the outſide. Pray give all the honeſt Gentlemen of the Coffee-houſe of my acquaintance and yours, my humble Service, whom with you, I hope to ſee again, within theſe three weeks at *London*.

Cleve *near* Shrewsbury,
Auguſt *the* 31ſt 1695.

To

## *Mr.* Dennis *to Mr.* Wycherly.

*Dear Sir,*

A Man who has the Vanity of pretending to write, must certainly love you extreamly well, if he does not hate you after he has received from you such a Letter as yours; And he must undoubtedly shew a great deal of Friendship, when he assures you he does not envy you the very Lines by which you commend him. A Man had need be very well acquainted with the goodness of your Nature, to be satisfied that you do not praise with a Wicked Design to mortifie. There are few Writers so humble, whom Mr. *Wycherly*'s Commendation would not render vain; but then there are few Writers so Proud, whom the Wit that Mr. *Wycherly* shews in commending them would not humble. So that a Man who did not know you, wou'd be apt to believe that whenever you write to Praise, you do but like a Wrestler who lifts People up on purpose to throw them down, and the Higher he raises them, makes their fall the Greater. Your Commendation is to a Modest Man, what the

Second

Second Bottle is to a Sober Man; it raiſes his Vigour while he is ſwallowing it; but the Wit is as ſure to make the one Melancholly upon mature Reflection, as the Wine is certain to leave the other Spiritleſs after the third Concoction: But our Infirmity cannot be your fault; to whom we are oblig'd for your generous Intentions, which give you ſuch a peculiar Diſtinction from ordinary Men of Wit. Indeed, by a Juſt, and a Noble Confidence, which you may repoſe in your ſelf, you may always very ſafely commend; becauſe you may be always ſure to ſurpaſs. 'Tis Prudent and Noble at once in a Conqueror to extol the Conquered. To praiſe the Excellence which he o'ercomes, is but to commend himſelf. Beſides, it wins the very Heart and Soul of him that is overcome, if he has but Virtue enough to be ſo ſubdued; and makes him willing to leave his laſt Retrenchment. It would long ſince have had that Effect upon me, if the reſt of your good Qualities had not prevented it; which have ſo Cloſely and ſo Entirely tied me to you, that whenever I receive a Letter from you, my Vanity is ſure to gain on the one ſide, what it is certain to loſe on the other: For if I am mortified as to my own Wit, I do not fail to value my ſelf upon yours.

*London, Sept.* 10. 95. *I am, &c.*

## *To Mr.* Wycherly.

*Dear Sir,*

THE last time I was at *Wills*, I had the Mortification to hear, that our Friend Mr.—— had met with a Disappointment in ——; at which, some who were present were glad, affirming, that Success would have thrown him out of his Element; For that a Man of Wit is not qualified for Business so well as a Block-head: I have since had some Thoughts concerning that matter which I here send you, and of which I desire your Opinion.

Upon Reflection I have found out the following Reasons, why Block-heads are thought to be fittest for Business, and why they really succeed in it.

*First*, As their Brains are a great deal colder, than those are of Men of Wit, they must have but very strait Imaginations, and very barren Inventions; from whence it follows that they have but few thoughts, and that a few Objects fill their Capacities.

*Secondly*, It is reasonable enough to believe, that since they are uncapable of many Thoughts,

Thoughts, those few which they have, are determin'd by their Necessities, their Appetites, and their Desires, to what they call their Fortunes and their Establishments.

*Thirdly*, It is not very hard to conceive, that since a Block-head has but a few Thoughts, and perhaps but one all his Life-time, which is his Interest, he should have it more perfect, and better digested, then Men of Wit have the same thought, who perhaps have a thousand every hour.

*Fourthly*, It is easie to comprehend, that since such a one has but a few thoughts, or perhaps but one, which by often revolving in his Mind, he has digested, and brought to Perfection, he should readily pass from Thought to Action. For he must grow weary of thinking so often of one and the same thing; and since the Nature of the Soul requires Agitation, as soon as his little Speculation ceases, he must of necessity act to divert himself.

*Fifthly*, It will be certainly found, that as a little Thought often makes a Man active in Business, so a little Judgment often makes him Diligent; for he may well be eager in the Pursuit of those things, on which, seduced by Passion and Vulgar Opinion, he sets an exorbitant Value; and concerning whose Natures and Incertainty he is not very

very capable of making solid Reflections. For thô Prudence may oblige a Man to secure a Competency, yet never was any one by right Reason induced to seek Superfluities.

*Sixthly*, Penury of thought supposes Littleness of Soul, which is often requisite for the Succeeding in Business: For a Blockhead is Sordid enough to descend to Trick and Artifice, which in Business are often necessary to procure Success, unless they are more than supplied, by a Prudence deriv'd from a Consummate Experience, or from a great Capacity.

Thus have I endeavour'd to give the reason, why a Fool succeeds better in Business than a Man of Wit, who has a Multitude of thoughts, and which fly at the Noblest Objects; and who finds that there is something so pleasing, and so noble, in thinking rightly, and more especially in the sublime Speculations of exalted Reason, that he finds it intollerably irksome to descend to Action, and abhors the very thought of being diligent in things, for which he has an extream Contempt.

Thus you see, that in some measure a Fool may be said to be better fitted out for Business, than a Man of Wit. But it is high time to distinguish. For first, when

I ſay that a Block-head is fitted for Buſineſs, I mean only for little Buſineſs: For to affirm, that he is qualified for Affairs that require Extent of Capacity, would be a Contradiction in Terms. Secondly, when I affirm, that a Man of Wit is leſs capacitated for Buſineſs, I mean that he is leſs ſo, as long as he keeps in his Natural Temper, and remains in a State of Tranquillity. But if once he comes to be thrown out of that by the Force of a Violent Paſſion, and fir'd with Zeal for his Country's Service, or enflam'd by Ambition, and Buſineſs can be made ſubſervient to the gratifying of thoſe Paſſions, then I dare boldly affirm, that one Man of Wit will go further than a Thouſand of thoſe who want it. Of which it would be eaſie to give more than one Inſtance amongſt our preſent Miniſters. But I will be contented with putting you in mind that none of the *Romans* had more Wit than *Cæſar*, and none of the *French* than *Richelieu*.

Before I conclude, I muſt give you a Caution: Which is, that by the Word Blockhead, I do not mean one that is ſtupid, but that I apply that word according to the Language of you Men of Wit, to one who thinks but a little: And that on the other ſide, by a Man of Wit, I do not mean

mean every Coxcomb whose Imagination has got the Ascendant of his little Reason; but a Man like you, Sir, or our most Ingenious Friend, in whom Fancy and Judgment are like a well-match'd Pair; the first like an extraordinary Wife, that appears always Beautiful, and always Charming, yet is at all times Decent, and at all times Chast; the Second like a Prudent and well-bred Husband, whose very Sway shews his Complaisance, and whose very Indulgence shews his Authority.

*I am,*

*Dear Sir,*

*Octob.* 30.

*Your most Humble*

*Servant,*

John Dennis.

*To*

## To Mr. Dryden.

Sir,

THô no Man writes to his Friends with greater Eaſe, or with more Chearfulneſs, than my ſelf; and thô I have lately had the Preſumption to place you at the Head of that ſmall Party, nevertheleſs I have experienc'd with Grief, that in writing to you I have not found my old Facility.

Since I came to this place I have taken up my Pen ſeveral times in order to write to you, but have conſtantly at the very Beginning found my ſelf Damp'd and Diſabled; upon which I have been apt to believe that extraordinary Eſteem may ſometimes make the Mind as Impotent as a Violent Love does the Body, and that the vehement Deſire we have to exert it, extremely decays our Ability. I have heard of more than one luſty Gallant, who, thô he could at any time with Readineſs and Vigour poſſeſs the Woman whom he lov'd but moderately, yet when he has been about to give his darling Miſtreſs, whom he has vehemently and long deſir'd, the firſt laſt

Proof

Proof of his Passion, has found on a sudden that his Body has Jaded and grown resty under his Soul, and gone backward the faster, the more he has spurr'd it forward. Esteem has wrought a like effect upon my Mind. My extraordinary inclination to shew that I honour you at an extraordinary rate, and to shew it in words that might not be altogether unworthy Mr. *Dryden*'s Perusal, incapacitates me to perform the very action to which it incites me, and Nature sinks in me under the fierce Effort: But I hope you will have the Goodness to pardon a Weakness that proceds from a Cause like this, and to consider that I had pleas'd you more if I had honour'd you less. Who knows but that yet I may please you, if you encourage me to mend my Fault? to which if you knew but the Place I am in, Charity would engage you, thô Justice could not oblige you. For I am here in a Desart, depriv'd of Company, and depriv'd of News; in a Place where I can hear nothing at all of the Publick, and what proves it ten times more a Desart, nothing at all of you: For all who are at present concern'd for their Countrey's Honour, hearken more after your Preparatives, than those for the next Campaigne. These last may possibly turn to our Confu-

sion,

sion, so uncertain are the Events of War; but we know that whatever you undertake must prove Glorious to *England*, and thô the French may meet with Success in the Field, by you we are sure to Conquer them. In War there are a thousand unlook'd for accidents which happen every day, and Fortune appears no where more like her self; but in a Combat of Wit, the more Humane Contention, and the more Glorious Quarrel, Merit will be always sure to prevail: And therefore, thô I can but hope that the Confederate Forces will give chase to *De Lorges* and *Luxemburgh*, I am very confident that *Boileau* and *Racine* will be forced to submit to you. Judge therefore if I, who very much love my Country, and who so much esteem you, must not with a great deal of Impatience expect to hear from you.

*Bushy-Heath,*
*Jan.* 169¾.

*I am,*

*Sir,*

*Your most humble Servant.*

To

## *To Mr.* Dryden.

*Dear Sir,*

YOU may see already by this Presumptuous greeting, that Encouragement gives as much Assurance to Friendship, as it imparts to Love. You may see too, that a Friend may sometimes proceed to acknowledge Affection, by the very same Degrees by which a Lover declares his Passion. This last at first confesses Esteem, yet owns no Passion but Admiration. But as soon as he is Animated by one kind Expression, his Look, his Style, and his very Soul are altered, But as Sovereign Beauties know very well, that he who confesses he Esteems and Admires them, implies that he Loves them, or is inclin'd to Love them; a Person of Mr. *Dryden*'s Exalted Genius, can discern very well, that when we esteem him highly, 'tis Respect restrains us if we say no more. For where great Esteem is without Affection. 'tis often attended with Envy, if not with Hate; which Passions Detract even when they Commend, and Silence is their highest Panegyric. 'Tis indeed

impoſſible, that I ſhould refuſe to Love a Man, who has ſo often given me all the pleaſure that the moſt Inſatiable Mind can deſire; when at any time I have been Dejected by Diſapointments, or Tormented by cruel Paſſions, the recourſe to your Verſes has Calm'd my Soul, or rais'd it to Tranſports which made it contemn Tranquillity. But thô you have ſo often given me all the pleaſure I was able to bear, I have reaſon to complain of you on this account, that you have confin'd my Delight to a narrower compaſs. *Suckling*, *Cowley* and *Denham*, who formerly Raviſh'd me in ev'ry part of them, now appear taſtleſs to me in moſt, and *Waller* himſelf, with all his Gallantry, and all that Admirable Art of his turns, appears three quarters Proſe to me. Thus 'tis plain that your Muſe has done me an injury; but ſhe has made me amends for it. For ſhe is like thoſe Extraordinary Women, who, beſides the Regularity of their Charming Features, beſides their engaging Wit, have Secret, Unaccountable, Enchanting Graces, which thô they have been long and often Enjoy'd, make them always new and always deſirable. I return you my hearty thanks for your moſt obliging Letter. I had been very unreaſonable if I had Repin'd that the Favour ar-

riv'd

riv'd no sooner. 'Tis allowable to grumble at the delaying a payment, but to murmur at the deferring a Benefit, is to be impudently ungrateful beforehand. The Commendations which you give me, exceedingly sooth my Vanity. For you with a breath can bestow or confirm Reputation; a whole Numberless People Proclaims the praise which you give, and the Judgments of three mighty Kingdoms appear to depend upon yours. The People gave me some little applause before, but to whom, when they are in humour will they not give it, and to whom when they are froward will they not refuse it? Reputation with them depends upon Chance, unless they are guided by those above them. They are but the keepers as it were of the Lottery which Fortune sets up for Renown; upon which Fame is bound to attend with her Trumpet, and Sound when Men draw the Prizes. Thus I had rather have your Approbation than the applause of Fame. Her commendation argues good luck, but Mr. *Dryden*'s implies desert. Whatever low opinion I have hitherto had of my self, I have so great a value for your Judgment, that, for the sake of that, I shall be willing hence-forward to believe that I am not wholly desertless; but that you may find me still more

Supportable, I shall endeavour to compensate whatever I want in those glittering Qualities, by which the World is dazled, with Truth, with Faith, and with Zeal to serve you; qualities which for their rarity, might be objects of wonder, but that Men dare not appear to admire them, because their Admiration would manifestly declare their want of them. Thus Sir, let me assure you, that thô you are acquainted with several Gentlemen, whose Eloquence and Wit may capacitate them to offer their service with more Address to you, yet no one can declare himself, with greater Chearfulness, or with greater Fidelity, or with more profound Respect than my self.

*Sir,*

*Your most*, &c.

*March* 3. 1693.

Mr.

## *Mr.* Dryden *to Mr.* Dennis.

*My Dear Mr.* Dennis,

WHen I read a Letter ſo full of my Commendations as your laſt, I cannot but conſider you as the Maſter of a vaſt Treaſure, who having more than enough for your ſelf, are forc'd to ebb out upon your Friends. You have indeed the beſt right to give them, ſince you have them in Propriety; but they are no more mine when I receive them, than the Light of the Moon can be allowed to be her own, who ſhines but by the Reflexion of her Brother. Your own Poetry is a more Powerful Example, to prove that the Modern Writers may enter into compariſon with the Ancients, than any which *Perrault* could produce in *France*; yet neither he, nor you who are a better Critick, can perſuade me that there is any room left for a Solid Commendation at this time of day, at leaſt for me. If I undertake the Tranſlation of *Virgil*, the little which I can perform will ſhew at leaſt, that no Man is fit to write after him, in a barbarous Modern

dern Tongue. Neither will his Machines be of any ſervice to a Chriſtian Poet. We ſee how ineffectually they have been try'd by *Taſſo*, and by *Arioſto*. 'Tis uſing them too dully if we only make Devils of his Gods: As if, for Example, I would raiſe a Storm, and make uſe of *Æolus*, with this only difference of calling him Prince of the Air. What invention of mine would there be in this; or who would not ſee *Virgil* thorough me; only the ſame trick play'd over again by a Bungling Juggler? *Boileau* has well obſerved, that it is an eaſie matter in a Chriſtian Poem, for God to bring the Devil to reaſon. I think I have given a better hint for New Machines in my Preface to *Juvenal*; where I have particularly recommended two Subjects, one of King *Arthur*'s Conqueſt of the *Saxons*, and the other of the *Black Prince* in his Conqueſt of *Spain*. But the Guardian Angels of Monarchys and Kingdoms, are not to be touch'd by every hand. A Man muſt be deeply converſant in the Platonick Philoſophy to deal with them; And therefore I may reaſonably expect that no Poet of our Age will preſume to handle thoſe Machines, for fear of diſcovering his own Ignorance; or if he ſhould, he might perhaps be Ingrateful enough not to own me for his Benefa-

ctour.

&tour. After I have confeſs'd thus much of our Modern Heroick Poetry, I cannot but conclude with Mr. *Rym* —— that our Engliſh Comedy is far beyond any thing of the Ancients. And notwithſtanding our irregularities, ſo is our Tragedy. *Shakeſpear* had a Genius for it; and we know, in ſpite of Mr. *R* —— that Genius alone is a greater Virtue (if I may ſo call it) than all other Qualifications put together. You ſee what ſucceſs this Learned Critick has found in the World, after his Blaſpheming *Shakeſpear*. Almoſt all the Faults which he has diſcover'd are truly there; yet who will read Mr. *Rym*——or not read *Shakeſpear*? For my own part I reverence Mr. *Rym*—s Learning, but I deteſt his Ill Nature and his Arrogance. I indeed, and ſuch as I, have reaſon to be afraid of him, but *Shakeſpear* has not. There is another part of Poetry in which the Engliſh ſtand almoſt upon an equal foot with the Ancients; and 'tis that which we call Pindarique; introduced but not perfected by our Famous Mr. *Cowley*: and of this, Sir, you are certainly one of the greateſt Maſters. You have the Sublimity of Senſe as well as Sound, and know how far the Boldneſs of a Poet may lawfully extend. I could wiſh you would cultivate this kind of Ode; and

reduce it either to the same Measures which *Pinder* us'd, or give new Measures of your own. For, as it is, it looks like a vast Tract of Land newly discover'd. The Soil is wonderfully Fruitful, but Unmanur'd, overstock'd with Inhabitants; but almost all Salvages, without Laws, Arts, Arms, or Policy. I remember Poor *Nat. Lee*, who was then upon the Verge of Madness, yet made a Sober, and a Witty Answer to a Bad Poet, who told him, *It was an easie thing to write like a Madman: No*, said he, *'tis a very difficult to write like a Madman, but 'tis a very easie matter to write like a Fool. Otway* and He are safe by Death from all Attacks, but we poor Poets Militant (to use Mr. *Cowley*'s Expression) are at the Mercy of Wretched Scribblers: And when they cannot fasten upon our Verses, they fall upon our Morals, our Principles of State and Religion. For my Principles of Religion, I will not justifie them to you. I know yours are far different. For the same Reason I shall say nothing of my Principles of State. I believe you in yours follow the Dictates of your Reason, as I in mine do those of my Conscience. If I thought my self in an Error I would retract it; I am sure that I suffer for them; and *Milton* makes even the Devil say,

That

That no Creature is in love with Pain. For my Morals, betwixt Man and Man, I am not to be my own Judge. I appeal to the World if I have Deceiv'd or Defrauded any Man: And for my private Converſation, they who ſee me every day can be the beſt Witneſſes, whether or no it be Blameleſs and Inoffenſive. Hitherto I have no reaſon to complain that Men of either Party ſhun my Company. I have never been an Impudent Beggar at the Doors of Noblemen: My Viſits have indeed been too rare to be unacceptable; and but juſt enough to teſtifie my Gratitude for their Bounty, which I have frequently received, but always unask'd, as themſelves will Witneſs. I have written more than I needed to you on this Subject: For I dare ſay you juſtifie me to your ſelf. As for that which I firſt intended for the Principal Subject of this Letter, which is my Friend's Paſſion and his Deſign of Marriage, on better conſideration I have chang'd my Mind: For having had the Honour to ſee my Dear Friend *Wycherly*'s Letter to him on that occaſion, I find nothing to be added or amended. But as well as I love Mr. *Wycherly*, I confeſs I love my ſelf ſo well, that I will not ſhew how much I am inferiour to him in Wit and Judgment; by undertaking any

any thing after him. There is *Moſes* and the Prophets in his Counſel. *Jupiter* and *Juno*, as the Poets tell us, made *Tireſias* their Umpire, in a certain Merry Diſpute, which fell out in Heav'n betwixt them. *Tireſias* you know had been of both Sexes, and therefore was a Proper Judge; our Friend Mr. *Wycherly* is full as competent an Arbitrator. He has been a Batchelor, and Marry'd Man, and is now a Widower. *Virgil* ſays of *Ceneus*,

*Nunc Vir nunc Fœmina Ceneus,*
*Rurſus & in veterem fato revoluta figuram.*

Yet I ſuppoſe he will not give any large commendations to his middle State: Nor as the Sailer ſaid, will be fond after a Ship-wrack to put to Sea again. If my Friend will Adventure after this, I can but wiſh him a good Wind, as being his and

*My Dear Mr.* Dennis,

*Your moſt Affectionate*

*and moſt Faithful Servant*

John Dryden.

*My*

*Written for My Lady* C. *to her Couſin* R----. *of the* Temple. *By Mr.* Dennis.

*After ſhe had received from him a Copy of Verſes on her Beauty.*

*Couſin,*

I Received yours with the Verſes inclos'd, and here return you my hearty thanks, for the Face, the Shape, the Meen, which you have ſo generouſly beſtow'd upon me. From looking upon your Verſes I went to my Glaſs. But, Jeſu! The difference! Tho I bought it to Flatter me, yet Compar'd to you, I found it a Plain-Dealer. It ſhow'd me immediately that I have been a great deal more beholding to you, than I have been to Nature. For ſhe only form'd me not Frightful, but you have made me Divine. But as you have been a great deal kinder than Nature has been to me, I think my ſelf obliged in Requital, to be a good deal more Liberal than Heav'n has been to you, and

to

to allow you as large a Stock of Wit as you have giv'n me of Beauty. Since ſo Honeſt a Gentleman as your ſelf, has Stretcht his Conſcience to commend my Perſon, I am bound in Gratitude to do Violence to my Reaſon, to Extol your Verſes. When I left the Town, I deſir'd you to furniſh me with the News of the Place, and the firſt thing I have receiv'd from you, is a Copy of Verſes on my Beauty. By which you Dexterouſly infer, that the moſt extraordinary piece of News you can ſend me, is to tell me that I am Hanſome. By which ingenious Inference, you had Infallibly brought the Scandal of a Wit upon you, if your Verſes had not ſtood up in your Juſtification. But tell me truly Couſin, could you think that I ſhould prove ſo eaſy a Creature as to believe all that you have ſaid of me? How could you find in your heart to make ſuch a Fool of me, and ſuch a Cheat of your ſelf? To Intoxicate me with Flattery, and draw me in to Truck my little Stock of Wit and Judgment, for a meer Imagination of Beauty; when the Real thing too, falls ſo infinitely ſhort of what you would make me exchange for the very Fancy of it. For, Couſin, there is this conſiderable Difference between the Merit of Wit and Beauty; that Men

are

are never Violently Influenc'd by Beauty, unless it has weaken'd their Reason. And never feel half the force of Wit, unless their Judgments are Sound. The principal time in which those of your Sex admire Beauty in ours, is between Seventeen and Thirty, that is, after they are past their Innocence, and before they are come to their Judgments. And now Cousin, have not you been Commending a pretty Quality in me, to Admire which, as I have just shewn you, supposes not only a Corrupted Will, but a raw Understanding. Besides, how Frail, how Transitory is it! Nature deprives us of it at Thirty, if Diseases spare it till then. By which constant proceeding, she seems to Imply, that she gives it us as a *Gugaw* to please us in the Childhood of our Reasons; and takes it from us as a thing below us, when we come to years of Discretion. Thus Cousin, have you been commending a Quality in me, which has nothing of true Merit in it, and of which I have no greater a share, than to keep me from being scandalous. So that all I could have got by your kindness, if I had parted with my Judgment, in order to reap the benefit of it, had been nothing but wretched Conceit, and ridiculous Affectation. If I thought you

you had enough of the Gallant Man in you to take what I ſay in good part, I would adviſe you to engage no further in Poetry. Be rul'd by a Woman for once, and mind your *Cook upon Littleton*. Rather Pettifog than Flatter. For if you are reſolved to be a Cheat, you will ſhow at leaſt ſome Conſcience, in reſolving rather to chouſe People of their Money, than to Bubble them of their Underſtandings. Beſides, Couſin, you have not a Genius which will make a great Poet, and be pleaſed to conſider, that a ſmall Poet is a ſcandalous Wight, that indifferent Verſes are very bad ones, and that an Inſipid Panegyric upon another is a ſevere Libel upon your ſelf. Beſides, there will ſtart up a Satyr one day, and then woe be to Cold Rimers. Old *England* is not yet ſo Barren, but there will ariſe ſome generous Spirit, who, beſides a Stock of Wit and good Senſe, which are no very common Qualities, will not only be furniſhed with a ſound Judgment, which is an Extraordinary Talent; but with a true taſt for Eloquence and Wit, which is ſcarce any where to be found, and which Comprehends not only a juſt Diſcernment, but a fine Penetration, and a delicate Criticiſm. Such a Satyriſt as this

this, Cousin, must arise, and therefore you had best take care, by a Judicious Silence, that whenever he appears, he may be sure to divert you, and not afflict you.

*I am &c.*

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*To*

## *To Mr—— at* Will's *Coffee-house in* Covent-Garden.

I Received your Panegyrick upon Pun's which I ſo approve of, that I am re ſolved to get it Printed, and bound up with *Eraſmus* his praiſe of Folly. Yet to con feſs a Truth, I was ſomething diſſatisfied to ſee Quibbling commended with ſo much Wit. For nothing can be writ with more Wit, than your Letter to the Reſerve of the Quibbles; which I ſuppoſe you inſerted a mongſt ſo many things which are ſo finely ſaid, leſt theſe ſhould have render'd you too Vain, or too much have Mortify'd me. But pray, after this Panegyrick upon Quib bles, give me leave to ask you the ſame Queſtion that the Lacedemonians ask'd the Sophiſter, who harangu'd in the Praiſe of *Hercules*. By the way, did you ever expect to hear a Quibble compar'd to *Hercules*? There's a Simile for you. I think, as *Novel* ſays, that's New. You, who are cry'd up for ſo great a Wit, tell me, without Envy, could you ever have thought upon that? But to return to my Queſtion. Here you

have

have spent a great deal of time in the Defence of Quibbles. Who said a Word against them? The Devil a Syllable did I mention of them in mine. It is true, I cited honest Mr. *Sw*—— but it is a hard Case, if the Quoting an Author must be construed the Condemning his Works. I have a great Respect and Kindness for Mr. *Sw*—— as I have for all who have any Excellence. And truly, I think that for the Management of Quibbles and Dice, there is no Man alive comes near him. And let me tell you, Sir, for all your new Emulation, he is a better Quibbler than you. But it is high time to give over Raillery: For if you were my Father a Thousand times, let me die if I would not rigorously examine that part of your Letter which pretends to defend Quibbling. You say that I am too Nice, and that my Aversion has something it in, that is very like Affectation: But here you must give me leave to turn your own Simile upon you. Can a Man be justly accus'd of Niceness or Affectation, because he appears offended at a Stink? When I tell you that Quibbling is extreamly Foolish; You know it is Foolish enough, you reply; but it is a Foolish thing that diverts. And do you think this knowledge of it will excuse the Folly? Give me leave to resume the afore-

mention'd Simile. Suppoſe a Fellow who breaks Wind, ſhould ſay to the Company, while they are cajoling their offended Noſe with Snuff, Look you Gentlemen, I know I am a Brutal Dog for this, this is very Naſty, but Begad it is very Diverting. Would the Excuſe think you be current? A Quibble diverts: Right; and ſo does a Hobby-Horſe, which in my mind, for the who can be diverted without reaſon, is the better Bawble of the two. A Quibble diverts! Jeſu! That this ſhould be ſpoken at *Will's*? Can there be a more Damnable Satyr upon Wit, than that ſo many Gentlemen who have ſo very much of it, ſhould be forc'd to play the Fool to divert one another? But for God's ſake, what do you mean when you ſay a Quibble diverts you? It makes you Laugh, I warrant? Why the greateſt Coxcomb about the Town ſhall out-do you in Laughing at any time. Nature who has dealt Impartially with her Children, and who has given them both two diſtinctions from Beaſts, reaſon and Laughter, has, where ſhe has beſtow'd the more of the One, conferr'd the leſs of the Other: And therefore a Coxcomb will Laugh at nothing. Ay, that indeed, ſay you, is a ſign of a Fool. Well! My Dear Friend, I have ſo much kindneſs for thee, that I

out of thy own Mouth, thou ſhalt not be Judged: For if a Quibble is not Wit, it is nothing. But it is at as great a Diſtance from Wit, as an Idol is from the Deity; and I will no more believe nauſeous Equivocals to be Wit, becauſe ſome Sots have admir'd them, than I will believe Garlick to be God, becauſe the Ægyptians ador'd it. Nay, it is a more Damnable ſign of Stupidity in an Engliſhman, to make Wit of a Quibble, than it was in the Ægyptians, to make a God of their Garlick. But to return from whence I digreſſed; I have never appear'd ſo much a Stoick, but that I have been as much for Diverſion as any of you. But then am I for the Diverſion of Reaſonable Men and of Gentlemen. If there be any Diverſion in Quibbling, it is a Diverſion of which a Fool and a Porter is as capable as is the beſt of you. And therefore *Ben. Johnſon*, who writ every thing with Judgment, and who knew the Scum of the People, whenever he brings in a Porter or Tankard-Bearer, is ſure to introduce him Quibbling. But if Punning be a Diverſion, it is a very ſtrange one. There is as much difference between the ſilly Satisfaction which we have from a Quibble, and the raviſhing Pleaſure which we receive from a Beautiful Thought, as

there is betwixt a Faint Salute and Fruition. But what would you have us do, you cry. Men of the greateſt Parts are no more to be found with Wit always about them, than rich Rogues with always the Ready. Why, look you, Sir, as the firſt Step to Wiſdom is to be freed from Folly, ſo the firſt Approach to Wit is a Contempt of Quibbling. If it happens at any time that you have not your Wit about you, we will either have Patience ſuch time as you have, or take good ſenſe in the lieu of it; If you are not in a Condition to Delight us, we will be contented to be inſtructed; we will make your Inſtruction nouriſh our Vanity, ſo turn even that to Delight. Nay there is ſomething Noble in right Reaſon, and conſequently ſomething Delightful. Truth is ſo divinely Beautiful, that it muſt pleaſe Eternally; but falſhood is baſe, and muſt ſhock all generous Minds, and every Equivocal is but ambiguous Falſhood, that is the Pittiful'ſt, the Baſeſt of Falſhoods.

## *To* Walter Moyle, *Esq;*

*Dear Sir,*

THO you are already indebted a Letter to me, yet I think fit to give you credit for another; tho perhaps you may little desire to run into Debt this way: But it is for two Reasons that I give you the trouble of this. For, in the first place, I am taking a turn for a little time into the Countrey, and I design that the Prevention of this should make some amends for the Delay of my next. In the Second place, I have made some provision of Scandal, which I am willing to make use of, before it grows stale upon my hands. Just after I writ my last, I threw my self into a Detach'd Party, which march'd from *Wilts* to *Namur*; with the same Design that the

Volunteers went to *Breſt*, to keep out of the Fray, and be Spectators of the Action. However, before they were come to Blows, I went amongſt the Tents, and had ſome diſcourſe with Major-General *R*——whom I found to be Father to Mr. *Bays* his *Parthenope*. For the Major-General is a very Honeſt Fellow, who ſells Ale by the Town Wall: We had the Satisfaction to ſee that the Town was taken, and the whole Siege was carried on as Sieges generally are, with a great deal more Noiſe than Miſchief. On *Monday* laſt which was the Second of *September*, I travell'd into the City, where I had the Satisfaction to ſee two very ridiculous Sights. The Firſt was a Bawd carted for an action which had ſome relation to that memorable Day. For ſhe was convicted of being an Accomplice in ſetting Fire to an Ancient and Venerable Pile of the City, that is, ſhe was found Guilty of being inſtrumental in the Clapping an Alderman. I ſtood in a Book-ſeller's Shop to ſee her paſs, which Book-ſeller was packing up ſome Scoundrel Authors to ſend them away to the Plantations. Theſe Authors are Criminals, which being ſentenc'd to be burnt here, have at laſt found Grace and got off with Tranſporta-

tion

tion. You remember the terrible News that we heard at *P* —— which, as it sprung from a ridiculous Occasion, that is, my Lady Mayoresses Gossipping, has had a Comical Consequence. For the Common-Council have made an Order, by which my Lady Mayoress is dispens'd during the Wars, from seeing those Children born in the City, which are got in the Suburbs; that is from being present at one of their Wive's Labours. But 'tis time to return to the Fair. Last Night I took a turn in the Cloisters, where I was entertain'd with a great many Dialogues between Vizour and Vallancy Wig, upon which I leave you to be Judge, whether my Eyes or my Ears were the better Entertain'd of the two. For I heard a great deal of Unintelligible Language, address'd to a great many Invisible Faces. As if because the Women had resolv'd not to be Seen, the Men had determin'd not to be Understood; and had in revenge Eclips'd the Light of their Understanding by Fustian, as the others had obscur'd the Lustre of their Eyes by Velvet. Formerly the Ladies made use of White and Red to attract, but within these Thirty Years black has succeeded, and the Devil is found more

tempting in his proper Colour. I have neither time nor place for any more. You shall have the rest by the first Opportunity.

*Yours*, &c.

## *To Mr.* Congreve.

*Dear Sir,*

I Have now read over the Fox, in which tho I admire the strength of *Ben. Johnson's* Judgment, yet I did not find it so accurate as I expected. For first the very thing upon which the whole Plot turns, and that is the Discovery which *Mosca* makes to *Bonario*; seems to me, to be very unreasonable. For *I* can see no Reason, why he should make that Discovery which introduces *Bonario* into his Masters House. For the Reason which the Poet makes *Mosca* give in the Ninth Scene of the third Act, appears to be a very Absurd one. Secondly, *Corbaccio* the Father of *Bonario* is expos'd for his Deafness, a Personal defect; which is contrary to the end of Comedy Instruction. For Personal Defects cannot be amended; and the exposing such, can never Divert any but half-witted Men. *It* cannot fail to bring a thinking Man to reflect upon the Misery of Human Nature; and into what he may fall himself without any Fault

fault of his own. Thirdly, the play has two Characters, which have nothing to do with the design of it, which are to be look'd upon as Excrescencies. Lastly, the Character of *Volpone* is Inconsistent with it self. *Volpone* is like *Catiline*, *alieni appetens, sui profusus*; but that is only a double in his Nature, and not an Inconsistence. The Inconsistence of the Character appears in this, that *Volpone* in the fifth Act behaves himself like a Giddy Coxcombe, in the Conduct of that very Affair which he manag'd so Craftily in the first four. In which the Poet offends first against that Fam'd rule which *Horace* gives for the Characters.

*Servetur ad imum,*
*Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.*

And Secondly, against Nature, upon which, all the rules are grounded. For so strange an Alteration, in so little a time, is not in Nature, unless it happens by the Accident of some violent passion; which is not the case here. *Volpone* on the sudden behaves himself without common Discretion, in the Conduct of that very Affair which he had manag'd with so much Dexterity, for the space of three Years together. For why does he disguise himself?

Or,

or why does he repose the last Confidence in *Mosca*? Why does he cause it to be given out that he's Dead? Why, only to Plague his Bubbles. To Plague them, for what? Why only for having been his Bubbles. So that here is the greatest alteration in the World, in the space of twenty-four hours, without any apparent cause. The design of *Volpone* is to Cheat, he has carried on a Cheat for three years together, with Cunning and with Success. And yet he on a sudden in cold blood does a thing, which he cannot but know must Endanger the ruining all.

*I am,*

*Dear Sir,*

*Your most Humble*

*Servant.*

## To Mr. Congreve.

*Dear Sir,*

I will not augment the Trouble which I give you by making an Apology for not giving it you ſooner. Thô I am heartily ſorry that I kept ſuch a trifle as the inclos'd, and a trifle writ Extempore, long enough to make you expect a labour'd Letter. But becauſe in the Inclos'd, I have ſpoken particularly of *Ben. Johnſon*'s Fox, I deſire to ſay three or four words of ſome of his Plays more generally. The Plots of the Fox, the ſilent Woman, the Alchimiſt, are all of them very Artful. But the Intrigues of the Fox, and the Alchimiſt, ſeem to me to be more dexterouſly perplexed, than to be happily diſentangled. But the Gordian knot in the Silent Woman is untyed with ſo much Felicity, that that alone, may Suffice to ſhow *Ben Johnſon* no ordinary Heroe. But, then perhaps, the Silent Woman may want the very Foundation of a good Comedy, which the other two cannot be ſaid to want. For it ſeems to me, to be without

out a Moral. Upon which Absurdity, *Ben Johnson* was driven by the Singularity of *Morose's* Character, which is too extravagant for Instruction, and fit, in my opinion, only for Farce. For this seems to me, to Constitute the most Essential Difference, betwixt Farce and Comedy, that the Follies which are expos'd in Farce are Singular; and those are particular, which are expos'd in Comedy. These last are those, with which some part of an Audience may be suppos'd Infected, and to which all may be suppos'd Obnoxious. But the first are so very odd, that by Reason of their Monstrous Extravagance, they cannot be thought to concern an Audience; and cannot be supposed to instruct them. For the rest of the Characters in these Plays, they are for the most part true, and Most of the Humorous Characters Master-pieces. For *Ben Johnson's* Fools, seem to shew his Wit a great deal more then his Men of Sense. I Admire his Fops, and but barely Esteem his Gentlemen. *Ben* seems to draw Deformity more to the Life than Beauty. He is often so eager to pursue Folly, that he forgets to take Wit along with him. For the Dialogue, it seems to want very often that Spirit, that Grace, and that Noble Railery, which are to be found in more Modern Plays, and

and which are Virtues that ought to be Inſeparable from a finiſh'd Comedy. But there ſeems to be one thing more wanting than all the reſt, and that is Paſſion, I mean that fine and that delicate Paſſion, by which the Soul ſhows its Politeneſs, ev'n in the midſt of its trouble. Now to touch a Paſſion is the ſureſt way to Delight. For nothing agitates like it. Agitation is the Health and Joy of the Soul, of which it is ſo entirely fond, that even then, when we imagine we ſeek Repoſe, we only ſeek Agitation. You know what a Famous Modern Critick has ſaid of Comedy.

*Il faut que ſes acteurs badinent noblement,*
*Que ſon Noeud bien formé ſe denoue aiſe-*
*(ment ;*
*Que l'action Marchant ou la raiſon la guide,*
*Ne ſe perde Jamma dans une Scens vuide,*
*Que ſon Stile humble et doux ſe releue a pro-*
*(pos,*
*Que ſes diſcours par tout fertiles en bons mots,*
*Soient pleins de paſſions finement maniées,*
*Et les Scenes toujours l'une a l'autre liées,*

I leave you to make the Aplication to *Johnſon*—Whatever I have ſaid my ſelf of

of his Comedies, I submit to your better Judgment. For you who, after Mr. *Wicherly*, are incomparably the best Writer of it living; ought to be allowed to be the best Judge, too,

*I am,*

*Yours, &c.*

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*Mr.*

# *Mr.* Congreve, *to Mr.* Dennis.

## *Concerning Humour in Comedy.*

*Dear Sir,*

YOU write to me, that you have Entertained your self two or three days, with reading several Comedies, of several Authors; and your Observation is, that there is more of *Humour* in our English Writers, than in any of the other Comick Poets, Ancient or Modern. You desire to know my Opinion, and at the same time my Thought; of that which is generally call'd *Humour* in Comedy.

I agree with you, in an Impartial Preference of our English Writers, in that Particular. But if I tell you my Thoughts of *Humour*, I must at the same time confess, that what I take for true *Humour*, has not been so often written even by them, as is generally believed: And some who have valued themselves, and have been esteem'd by

others

others, for that kind of Writing, have seldom touch'd upon it. To make this appear to the World, would require a long and labour'd Discourse, and such as I neither am able nor willing to undertake. But such little Remarks, as may be continued within the Compass of a Letter, and such unpremediated Thoughts, as may be Communicated between Friend and Friend, without incurring the Censure of the World, or setting up for a *Dictator*, you shall have from me, since you have enjoyn'd it.

To Define *Humour*, perhaps, were as difficult, as to Define *Wit*; for like that, it is of infinite variety. To Enumerate the several *Humours* of Men, were a Work as endless, as to sum up their several Opinions. And in my mind the *Quot homines tot Sententiæ*, might have been more properly interpreted of *Humour*; since there are many Men, of the same Opinion in many things, who are yet quite different in Humours. But thô we cannot certainly tell what *Wit* is, or, what *Humour*, is yet we may go near to shew something, which is not *Wit* or not *Humour*; and yet often mistaken for both. And since I have mentioned *Wit* and *Humour* together, let me make the first Distinction between them, and observe to you that *Wit is often mistaken for Humour.*

I have obſerved, that when a few things have been Wittily and Pleaſantly ſpoken by any Character in a Comedy; it has been very uſual for thoſe, who make their Remarks on a Play, while it is acting, to ſay, *Such a thing is very Humorouſly ſpoken: There is a great Deal of Humour in that Part.* Thus the Character of the Perſon ſpeaking, may be, Surprizingly and Pleaſantly, is miſtaken for a Character of *Humour*; which indeed is a Character of *Wit*: But there is a great Difference between a Comedy, wherein there are many things *Humorouſly*, as they call it, which is *Pleaſantly* ſpoken; and one, where there are ſeveral Characters of *Humour*, diſtinguiſh'd by the Particular and Different Humours, appropriated to the ſeveral Perſons repreſented, and which naturally ariſe, from the different Conſtitutions, Complexions, and Diſpoſitions of Men. The ſaying of Humorous Things, does not diſtinguiſh Characters; For every Perſon in a Comedy may be allow'd to ſpeak them. From a Witty Man they are expected; and even a *Fool* may be permitted to ſtumble on 'em by chance. Thô I make a Difference betwixt *Wit* and *Humour*; yet I do not think that Humorous Characters exclude Wit: No, but the Manner of *Wit* ſhould be adapted

dapted to the *Humour*. As for Instance, a Character of a Splenetick and Peevish *Humour*, should have a Satyrical Wit. A Jolly and Sanguine *Humour*, should have a Facetious Wit. The Former should speak Positively; the Latter, Carelesly: For the former Observes, and shews things as they are; the latter, rather overlooks Nature, and speaks things as he would have them; and his *Wit* and *Humour* have both of them a less Alloy of Judgment than the others.

As *Wit*, so, its opposite, *Folly*, *is sometimes mistaken for Humour*.

When a Poet brings a *Character* on the Stage, committing a thousand Absurdities, and talking Impertinencies, roaring Aloud, and Laughing immoderately, on every, or rather upon no occasion; this is a Character of Humour.

Is any thing more common, than to have a pretended Comedy, stuff'd with such Grotesques, Figures, and Farce Fools? Things, that either are not in Nature, or if they are, are Monsters, and Births of Mischance; and consequently as such, should be stifled, and huddled out of the way, like *Sooterkins*; that Mankind may not be shock'd with an appearing Possibility of the Degeneration of a God-like *Species*. For my part, I am as willing to Laugh, as

any body, and as eaſily diverted with an Object truly ridiculous: but at the ſame time, I can never care for ſeeing things, that force me to entertain low thoughts of my Nature. I dont know how it is with others, but I confeſs freely to you, I could never look long upon a Monkey, without very Mortifying Reflections; thô I never heard any thing to the Contrary, why that Creature is not Originally of a Diſtinct *Species*. As I dont think *Humour* excluſive of *Wit*, neither do I think it inconſiſtent with *Folly*; but I think the Follies ſhould be only ſuch, as Mens Humours may incline 'em to; and not Follies intirely abſtracted from both Humour and Nature.

Sometimes, *Perſonal Defects are miſrepreſented for Humours.*

I mean, ſometimes Characters are barbarouſly expoſed on the Stage, ridiculing Natural Deformities, Caſual Defects in the Senſes, and Infirmities of Age. Sure the Poet muſt both be very Ill-natur'd himſelf, and think his Audience ſo, when he propoſes by ſhewing a Man Deform'd, or Deaf, or Blind, to give them an agreeable Entertainment; and hopes to raiſe their Mirth, by what is truly an object of Compaſſion. But much need not be ſaid upon this Head to any body, eſpecially to you, who in one

of

of your Letters to me concerning Mr. *Johnſon's Fox*, have juſtly excepted againſt this Immoral part of *Ridicule* in *Corbaccio*'s Character; and there I muſt agree with you to blame him, whom otherwiſe I cannot enough admire, for his great Maſtery of true Humour in Comedy.

*External Habit of Body is often miſtaken for Humour.*

By *External Habit*, I do not mean the Ridiculous Dreſs or Cloathing of a Character, thô that goes a good way in ſome received Characters. (But undoubtedly a Man's Humour may incline him to dreſs differently from other People) But I mean a Singularity of Manners, Speech, and Behaviour, peculiar to all, or moſt of the ſame Country, Trade, Profeſſion, or Education. I cannot think, that a *Humour*, which is only a Habit, or Diſpoſition contracted by Uſe or Cuſtom; for by a Diſuſe, or Complyance with other Cuſtoms, it may be worn off, or diverſify'd.

*Affectation is generally miſtaken for Humour.*

Theſe are indeed ſo much alike, that at a Diſtance, they may be miſtaken one for the other. For what is *Humour* in one, may be *Affectation* in another; and nothing is more common, than for ſome to affect particular

ways of saying, and doing things, peculiar to others, whom they admire and would imitate. *Humour* is the Life, *Affectation* the Picture. He that draws a Character of *Affectation*, shews *Humour* at the Second Hand; he at best but publishes a Translation, and his Pictures are but Copies.

But as these two last distinctions are the Nicest, so it may be most proper to Explain them; by Particular Instances from some Author of Reputation. *Humour* I take, either to be born with us, and so of a Natural Growth; or else to be grafted into us, by some accidental change in the Constitution, or revolution of the Internal Habit of Body; by which it becomes, if I may so call it, Naturaliz'd.

*Humour* is from Nature, *Habit* from Custom; and *Affectation* from Industry.

*Humour*, shews us as we *are*.

*Habit*, shews us, as we appear, under a forcible Impression.

*Affectation*, shews what we would be, under a Voluntary Disguise.

Thô here I would observe by the way, that a continued Affectation, may in time become a Habit.

The Character of *Morose* in the *Silent Woman*, I take to be a Character of Humour. And I choose to Instance this Character

racter to you, from many others of the ſame Author, becauſe I know it has been Condemn'd by many as Unnatural and Farce: And you have your ſelf hinted ſome diſlike of it, for the ſame Reaſon, in a Letter to me, concerning ſome of *Johnſon*'s Plays.

Let us ſuppoſe *Moroſe* to be a Man Naturally Splenetick and Melancholly; is there any thing more offenſive to one of ſuch a Diſpoſition, than Noiſe and Clamour? Let any Man that has the Spleen (and there are enough in *England*) be Judge. We ſee common Examples of this Humour in little every day. 'Tis ten to one, but three parts in four of the Company that you dine with, are Diſcompos'd and Startled at the Cutting of a Cork, or Scratching a Plate with a Knife: It is a Proportion of the ſame Humour, that makes ſuch or any other Noiſe offenſive to the Perſon that hears it; for there are others who will not be diſturb'd at all by it. Well; But *Moroſe* you will ſay, is ſo Extravagant, he cannot bear any Diſcourſe or Converſation, above a Whiſper. Why, It is his exceſs of this Humour, that makes him become Ridiculous, and qualifies his Character for Comedy. If the Poet had given him, but a Moderate proportion of that Humour, 'tis odds

but half the Audience, would have sided with the Character, and have Condemn'd the Author, for Exposing a Humour which was neither Remarkable nor Ridiculous. Besides, the distance of the Stage requires the Figure represented, to be something larger than the Life; and sure a Picture may have Features larger in Proportion, and yet be very like the Original. If this Exactness of Quantity, were to be observed in Wit, as some would have it in Humour; what would become of those Characters that are design'd for Men of Wit? I believe if a Poet should steal a Dialogue of any length, from the *Extempore* Discourse of the two Wittiest Men upon Earth, he would find the Scene but coldly receiv'd by the Town. But to the purpose.

The Character of Sir *John Daw* in the same Play, is a Character of Affectation. He every where discovers an Affectation of Learning; when he is not only Conscious to himself, but the Audience also plainly perceives that he is Ignorant. Of this kind are the Characters of *Thraso* in the Eunuch of *Terence*, and *Pyrgopolinices* in the *Miles Gloriosus* of *Plautus*. They affect to be thought Valiant, when both themselves and the Audience know they are not. Now such a boasting of Valour in Men who were

really

really Valiant, would undoubtedly be a *Humour*; for a Fiery *Dispositi*on might naturally throw a Man into the same Extravagance, which is only affected in the Characters I have mentioned.

The Character of *Cob* in *Every Man in his Humour*, and most of the under Characters in *Bartholomew-Fair*, discover only a Singularity of Manners, appropriated to the several Educations and Professions of the Persons represented. They are not Humours but Habits contracted by Custom. Under this Head may be ranged all Country-Clowns, Sailers, Tradesmen, Jockeys, Gamesters and such like, who make use of *Cants* or peculiar *Dialects* in their several Arts and Vocations. One may almost give a Receipt for the Composition of such a Character: For the Poet has nothing to do, but to collect a few proper Phrases and terms of Art, and to make the Person apply them by ridiculous Metaphors in his Conversation, with Characters of different Natures. Some late Characters of this kind have been very successful; but in my mind they may be Painted without much Art or Labour; since they require little more, than a good Memory and Superficial Observation. But true *Humour* cannot be shewn, without a Dissection of Nature, and a Narrow Search,

to discover the first Seeds, from whence it has its Root and growth.

If I were to write to the World, I should be obliged to dwell longer, upon each of these Distinctions and Examples; for I know that they would not be plain enough to all Readers. But a bare hint is sufficient to inform you of the Notions which I have on this Subject: And I hope by this time you are of my Opinion, that Humour is neither Wit, nor Folly, nor Personal defect; nor Affectation, nor Habit; and yet, that each, and all of these, have been both written and received for Humour.

I should be unwilling to venture even on a bare Description of Humour, much more, to make a Definition of it, but now my hand is in, Ile tell you what serves me instead of either. I take it to be, *A singular and unavoidable manner of doing, or saying any thing, Peculiar and Natural to one Man only; by which his Speech and Actions are distinguish'd from those of other Men.*

Our *Humour* has relation to us, and to what proceeds from us, as the Accidents have to a Substance; it is a Colour, Taste, and Smell, Diffused through all; thô our Actions are never so many, and different in Form, they are all Splinters of the same Wood, and have Naturally one Complexion

on

on; which thô it may be diſguiſed by Art, yet cannot be wholly changed: We may Paint it with other Colours, but we cannot change the Grain. So the Natural ſound of an Inſtrument will be diſtinguiſh'd, thô the Notes expreſſed by it, are never ſo various, and the Diviſions never ſo many. Diſſimulation, may by Degrees, become more eaſy to our practice; but it can never abſolutely Tranſubſtantiate us into what we would ſeem: It will always be in ſome proportion a Violence upon Nature.

A Man may change his Opinion, but I believe he will find it a Difficulty, to part with his *Humour*, and there is nothing more provoking, than the being made ſenſible of that difficulty. Sometimes, one ſhall meet with thoſe, who perhaps, Innocently enough, but at the ſame time impertinently, will ask the Queſtion; *Why are you not Merry? Why are you not* Gay, *Pleaſant, and Cheerful?* then inſtead of anſwering, could I ask ſuch one; *Why are you not handſome? Why have you not Black Eyes, and a better Complexion?* Nature abhors to be forced.

The two Famous Philoſophers of *Epheſus* and *Abdera*, have their different Sects at this day. Some Weep, and others Laugh at one and the ſame thing.

I dont doubt, but you have obſerved ſe-
veral Men Laugh when they are Angry,
others who are Silent; ſome that are Loud.
Yet I cannot ſuppoſe that it is the paſſion
of *Anger* which is in it ſelf different, o
more or leſs in one than t'other; but tha
it is the *Humour* of the Man that is Predo-
minant, and urges him to expreſs it in th
manner. Demonſtrations of pleaſure ar
as Various; one Man has a Humour of re-
tiring from all Company, when any thing
has happen'd to pleaſe him beyond expe-
ctation; he hugs himſelf alone, and think
it an Addition to the pleaſure to keep it Se-
cret. Another is upon Thorns till he ha
made Proclamation of it; and muſt mak
other people ſenſible of his happineſs, be-
fore he can be ſo himſelf. So it is in Grief
and other Paſſions. Demonſtrations of Lov
and the Effects of that Paſſion upon ſeveral
Humours, are infinitely different; but here
the Ladies who abound in Servants are the
beſt Judges. Talking of the Ladies, me-
thinks ſomething ſhould be obſerved of the
Humour of the Fair Sex; ſince they are ſome-
times ſo kind as to furniſh out a Character for
Comedy. But I muſt confeſs I have never
made any obſervation of what I Apprehend
to be true Humour in Women. Perhaps
Paſſions are too powerful in that Sex, to let

Humour

Humour have its Course; or may be by Reason of their Natural Coldness, Humour cannot Exert it self to that extravagant Degree, which it often does in the Male Sex. For if ever any thing does appear Comical or Ridiculous in a Woman, I think it is little more than an acquir'd Folly, or an Affectation. We may call them the weaker Sex, but I think the true Reason is, because our Follies are Stronger, and our Faults are more prevailing.

One might think that the Diversity of Humour, which must be allowed to be diffused throughout Mankind, might afford endless matter, for the support of Comedies. But when we come closely to consider that point, and nicely to distinguish the Difference of Humours, I believe we shall find the contrary. For thô we allow every Man something of his own, and a peculiar Humour; yet every Man has it not in quantity, to become Remarkable by it: Or, if many do become Remarkable by their Humours; yet all those Humours may not be Diverting. Nor is it only requisite to distinguish what Humour will be diverting, but also how much of it, what part of it to shew in Light, and what to cast in Shades; how to set it off by preparatory Scenes, and by opposing other humours to

it

it in the same Scene. Thrô a wrong Judgmen, sometimes, Mens Humours may be opposed when there is really no specific Difference between them; only a greater proportion of the same, in one than t'other occasion'd by his having more Flegm, or Choller, or whatever the Constitution is, from whence their Humours derive their Source.

There is infinitely more to be said on this Subject; thô perhaps I have already said to much; but I have said it to a Friend, who I am sure will not expose it, if he does not approve of it. I believe the Subject is intirely new, and was never touch'd upon before; and if I would have any one to see this private Essay, it should be some one, who might be provoked by my Errors in it, to Publish a more Judicious Treatise on the Subject. Indeed I wish it were done, that the World being a little acquainted with the scarcity of true Humour, and the difficulty of finding and shewing it, might look a little more favourably on the Labours of them, who endeavour to search into Nature for it, and lay it open to the Publick View.

I dont say but that very entertaining and useful Characters, and proper for Comedy, may be drawn from Affectations, and those other Qualities, which I have endeavoured to distinguish

distinguish from Humour: but I would not have such imposed on the World, for Humour, nor esteem'd of Equal value with it. It were perhaps, the Work of a long Life to make one Comedy true in all its Parts, and to give every Character in it a True and Distinct Humour. Therefore, every Poet must be beholding to other helps, to make out his Number of ridiculous Characters. But I think such a One deserves to be broke, who makes all false Musters; who does not shew one true Humour in a Comedy, but entertains his Audience to the end of the Play with every thing out of Nature.

I will make but one Observation to you more, and have done; and that is grounded upon an Observation of your own, and which I mention'd at the beginning of my Letter, *viz.* That there is more of Humour in our English Comick Writers than in any others. I do not at all wonder at it, for I look upon Humour to be almost of English Growth; at least, it does not seem to have found such Encrease on any other Soil. And what appears to me to be the reason of it, is the great Freedom, Privilege, and Liberty which the Common People of *England* enjoy. Any Man that has a Humour, is under no restraint, or fear of giving it Vent; they have a Proverb among them,

which

which, may be, will ſhew the Bent and Genius of the People, as well as a longer Diſcourſe: *He that will have a May-pole, ſhall have a May-pole.* This is a Maxim with them, and their Practice is agreeable to it. I believe ſomething Conſiderable too may be aſcribed to their feeding ſo much on Fleſh, and the Groſſneſs of their Diet in general. But I have done, let the Phyſicians agree that. Thus you have my Thoughts of *Humour*, to my Power of Expreſſing them in ſo little Time and Compaſs. You will be kind to ſhew me where in I have Err'd; and as you are very Capable of giving me Inſtruction, ſo, I think I have a very juſt title to demand it from you; being without Reſerve,

*July* 10. 1695.

*Your real Friend,*

*and humble Servant,*

W. Congreve.

To

## *To Mr.* Congreve, at Tunbridge.

*Dear Sir,*

MR. *Moyle* and I have impatiently expected to hear from you. But if the Well which you Drink at had sprung up from *Lethe*, you could not have been more forgetful of us. Indeed, as the *Tunbridge*-Water is good for the Spleen, it may be said in some manner to cause Oblivion. But I will yet a while hope that Mr. *Moyle* and I are not of the Number of things that plague you. However I am so sensible of your being mindful of me in Town, that I should be Ungrateful, if I should complain that you do not remember me where you you are. Mr. *Moyle* tells me that you have made a Favourable mention of me, to a certain Lady of your Acquaintance, whom he calls——— But then to mortifie the Old Man in me, or indeed rather the Young, he assur'd me, that you had given a much better Character of him. However, for

that which you gave of me I cannot but own my self obliged to you, and I look upon your Kindness as so much the greater, because I am sensible that I do not deserve it. And I could almost wish that your good Qualities, were not quite so numerous, that I might be able to make you some Return *in specie*. For commending you now, I do you but Justice, which a Man of Honour will do to his Enemy; whereas you, by partial Praise, have treated me like a Friend. I make no doubt, but that you do me the Justice to believe that I am perfectly yours; and that your Merit has engag'd me, and your Favours oblig'd me to be all my Life time,

*London, August 8. 94.*

*Dear Sir,*

*Your most Humble*

*Servant,*

John Dennis.

Mr.

## *Mr.* Congreve, *to* *Mr.* Dennis.

*Dear Sir,*

IT is not more to keep my Word, than to gratifie my Inclination, that I write to you; and tho' I have thus long deferr'd it, I may never forgetful of you, nor of my Promise. Indeed I waited in Expectation of something that might enable me to return the Entertainment I received from your Letters: but you represent the Town so agreeable to me, that you quite put me out of Conceit with the Country; and my Designs of making Observations from it.

Before I came to *Tunbridge*, I propos'd to my self the Satisfaction of Communicating the Pleasures of the Place to you: But if I keep my Resolution, I must transcribe, and

return you your own Letters; since I must own I have met with nothing else so truly Delightful. When you suppose the Country agreeable to me, you suppose such Reasons why it should be so, that while I read your Letter, I am of your Mind; but when I look off, I find I am only Charm'd with the Landskip which you have drawn. So that if I would see a fine Prospect of the Country, I must desire you to send it me from the Town; as if I would eat good Fruit here. Perhaps the best way were, to beg a Basket from my Friends in *Covent-Garden*. After all this, I must tell you, there is a great deal of Company at *Tunbridge*; and some very agreeable; but the greater part is of that sort, who at home converse only with their own Relations; and consequently when they come abroad, have few Acquaintance, but such as they bring with them. But were the Company better, or worse, I would have you expect no Characters from me; for I profess my self an Enemy to Detraction; and who is there that can justly merit Commendation? I have a mind to write to you, without the pretence of any manner of News, as I might drink to you without naming a Health; for I intend only my Service to you. I wish for you very often, that I might recommend

you

you to some new Acquaintance that I have made here, and think very well worth the keeping; I mean Idleness and a good Stomach. You would not think how People live here; every Body has the Appetite of an *Ostrich*, and as they Drink Steel in the Morning, so I believe at Noon they could digest Iron. But sure you will laugh at me for calling Idleness a New Acquaintance; when, to your Knowledge, the greatest part of my Business, is little better. Ay, but here's the Comfort of the Change; I am Idle now, without taking pains to be so, or to make other People so; for Poetry is neither in my Head, nor in my Heart. I know not whether these Waters may have any Communication with *Lethe*, but sure I am, they have none with the Streams of *Helicon*. I have often wonder'd how those wicked Writers of Lampoons, could crowd together such quantities of Execrable Verse, tag'd with bad Rhimes, as I have formerly been sent from this place: but I am half of Opinion now, that this Well is an *Anti-Inspirans*. What if we should get a Quantity of the Water privately convey'd into the Ciftern at *Will*'s Coffee-House, for an Experiment? But I am Extravagant——Tho' I remember *Ben. Johnson* in his Comedy of *Cynthia*'s Revels, makes a Well, which he

there calls the Fountain of Self-Love, to be the Source of many Entertaining and Ridiculous Humours. I am of Opinion, that something very Comical and New, might be brought upon the Stage, from a Fiction of the like Nature. But now I talk of the Stage, pray if any thing New should appear there, let me have an Account of it: for thô Plays are a kind of Winter-Fruit, yet I know there are now and then, some Windfalls at this time of Year, which must be presently served up, lest they should not keep till the proper Season of Entertainment. 'Tis now the time, when the Sun breeds Insects; and you must expect to have the Hum and Buz about your Ears, of Summer Flies and small Poets. Cuckows have this time allow'd 'em to Sing, thô they are damn'd to Silence all the rest of the Year. Besides, the approaching Feast of St. *Bartholomew* both creates an Expectation and bespeaks an Allowance of unnatural Productions and Monstrous Births. Methinks the Days of *Bartholomew-Fair* are like so many Sabbaths, or Days of Privilege, wherein Criminals and Malefactors in Poetry, are permitted to Creep abroad. They put me in mind (thô at a different time of year) of the Roman *Saturnalia*, when all the Scum, and Rabble, and Slaves of *Rome*, by a kind of Annual

and

and limited Manumission, were suffer'd to make Abominable Mirth, and Profane the Days of *Jubilee*, with Vile Buffoonry, by Authority. But I forget that I am writing a Post Letter, and run into length like a Poet in a Dedication, when he forgets his Patron to talk of himself. But I will take care to make no Apology for it, lest my Excuse (as Excuses generally do) should add to the Fault. Besides, I would have no appearance of Formality, when I am to tell you, that

*Tunbridge-Wells,*
*Aug.* 11. 95.

*I am,*

*Your real Friend,*

*and Humble Servant,*

W. Congreve.

# LETTERS OF LOVE,

## Written by ——

*Dear Madam,*

NOT believe that I love you? You cannot pretend to be so incredulous. If you do not believe my Tongue, consult my Eyes, consult your own. You will find by yours, that they have Charms; by mine, that I have a heart which feels them. Re-call to mind what happen'd last Night. That at least was a Lover's Kiss. Its Eagerness, its Fierceness, its Warmth, express'd the God its Parent. But oh! Its Sweetness, and its melting

melting Softneſs expreſs'd him more. With Trembling in my Limbs, and Feavers in in my *Soul* I *Raviſh'd* it. Convulſions, Pantings, Murmurings ſhewd the mighty Diſorder within me. The mighty Diſorder encreaſed by it. For *thoſe* Dear Lips ſhot through my Heart, and through my bleeding Vitals, *Delicious* Poiſon, and an avoidleſs but yet a *Charming* Ruine. What cannot a day produce? The Night before, I thought my ſelf a Happy Man. In want of nothing, and in faireſt expectation of Fortune; Approv'd of by Men of Wit, and Applauded by others; Pleaſed, nay *Charm'd* with my Friends, my *then* Deareſt Friends; Senſible of ev'ry *Delicate* pleaſure, and in their turns poſſeſſing all. But *Love*, Almighty *Love*, ſeems in a moment to have remov'd me to a *Prodigious* diſtance from every Object but *you* alone. In the midſt of Crowds I remain in Solitude. Nothing but *you* can lay hold of my Mind, and that can lay hold of nothing but *you*. I appear Tranſported to ſome Foreign Deſert with you, (*Oh* that I were really thus Tranſported,) where abundantly ſupplied with ev'ry thing in *thee*, I might live out an *Age* of uninterrupted Extacy. The Scene of the World's great Stage, ſeems ſuddenly and ſadly chang'd. Unlovely Objects are

all

all around me, excepting *thee*. The Charms of all the *World* appear to be Translated to thee. Thus in this sad, but *Oh too pleasing* State, my Soul can fix upon nothing but *thee*. *Thee* it Contemplates, Admires, Adores, nay, depends on; trusts in you alone. If you and Hope forsake it, Despair and endless Misery attend it.

*Dear Madam,*

THIS I ſend by the Permiſſion of a *Severe* Father, I *will* not ſay a *Cruel* one, ſince he is *yours*. *What* is it that he has taken ſo *Mortally* ill of me? That I *die* for his *Daughter* is my only Offence. And yet he has refuſed, to let me take ev'n my *Farewell* of you. *Thrice* happy be the Omen! May I never take my *Farewel* of thee, till my *Soul* takes leave of my Body. At leaſt, he cannot reſtrain me from Loving. *No*, I will *Love* thee in ſpight of all oppoſition. Thô your Friends and mine prove equally Averſe, yet I will *Love* thee with a Conſtancy that ſhall appear to *all the World*, to have ſomething *ſo Noble* in it, that all the World ſhall confeſs, that it deſerv'd not to be unfortunate. I will forſake even my *Friends* for *thee*. My *Honeſt*, my *Witty*, my *Brave* Friends; who had always been till I had ſeen *thee*, the *Dearest*

part

part of Mankind to me. Thou ſhalt ſupply the place of them all with me. Thou ſhalt be my *Boſom* my *Beſt-Lov'd* Friend, and at the ſame time, my only *Miſtreſs*, and my Deareſt Wife. Have the goodneſs to pardon this Familiarity. Tis the tendereſt leave of the Faithfuleſt Lover; and here to ſhew an over Reſpectfulneſs would be to wrong my Paſſion. That I *Love* thee more than *Life*, nay, even than *Glory*, which I courted *once* with a burning Deſire, bear Witneſs all my unquiet *Days*, and every reſtleſs *Night*, and that *Terrible* Agitation of Mind and Body, which proceed from my fear of *loſing* thee. To loſe *thee* is to loſe *all* Happineſs: *Tormenting* Reflection to a *Senſible* Soul! *How often* has my Reaſon been going upon it? But the loſs of *Reaſon* would be but *too* happy upon the loſs of *thee*. Since all the advantage that I could draw from its preſence, would be to know my ſelf Miſerable. But the time calls upon me. I am oblig'd to take an *Odious* Journey and leave thee behind with my Enemies. But thine ſhall never do thee harm with me. *Adieu* thou *Deareſt*, thou *Loveliest* of Creatures! No change of Time or Place, or the remonſtrances of the beſt of Friends, ſhall ever

be

be able to alter my Paſſion for thee. Be but one quarter ſo Kind, ſo Juſt to me, and the Sun will not ſhine on a happier Man than my ſelf.

*Dear Madam,*

MAY I presume to Beg pardon for the Fault I committed? So *Foolish* a Fault, that it was below not only a Man of *Sense*, but a *Man*; and of which nothing could ever have made me Guilty, but the *Fury* of a Passion with which none but your lovely *self* could inspire me. May I presume to beg Pardon for a Fault which I can *never* forgive my self? To purchase that Pardon what would I not endure? You shall see me prostrate before you, and use me like a *Slave*, while I kiss the Dear Feet that Trample upon me. But if my Crime be too great for Forgiveness, as indeed it is very great, deny me not one dear parting Look; Let me see you once before I must never see you more. *Christ!* I want Patience to support that *accurs'd* Thought. I have nothing in the *World* that is Dear to me, but *you*. *You* have made every thing else indifferent. And *can* I resolve never to see you *more*? In spight of my self I must *always* see you. Your form is fix'd by *Fate* in my Mind, and is *never* to be remov'd.

I see

I see those *lovely piercing* Eyes continually, I see *each* Moment those *ravishing* Lips which I have *gaz'd* on still with *desire*, and still have touch'd with *Transport*; and at which I have so often flown with *all the Fury* of the most Violent Love. Jesus! From whence, and whither am I fallen? From the hopes of *Blissful* Extasies to *blank* Despair. From the Expectation of *Immortal* Transports, which none but your Dear self can give me, and which none but he who loves like *me*, could ever so much as *think* of, to a Complication of *Cruel* Passions, and the most *Dreadful* Condition of Humane Life. My Fault, indeed, has been very great, and cries aloud for the *Severest* Vengeance. See it inflicted on me. See me *Despair* and *Die* for that Fault. But let me not die *Unpardon'd*. Madam I *Die* for you, but Die in the most *Cruel* and *Dreadful* manner. The Wretch that lies broken on the Wheel *alive*, feels not a *Quarter* of what I endure. Yet *Boundless Love* has been all my Crime. *Unjust*, *Ungrateful*, *Barbarous* return of it. Suffer me to take my *Eternal* leave of you. When I have done that, how easie will it be to bid all the rest of the World *Adieu*.

*Dear*

*Dear Madam,*

THis is the *Third* Letter that I have sent you since I came hither, whose which went before it were *all* the *Overflowings* of a *Heart* more *full* of Passion than ever was Man's before. It is *impossible* for me to be distant from *you* but I *must* send to you by *every* Occasion. And yet you can resolve to take no *Notice* of *all* my Tenderness. Yes, my *Dear* & *Inhumane* Creature, you can. You have been Sick, nay *dangerously* Sick, and have never sent to me since I left all the *World* for you, and could you resolve to leave the World for me? May, without so much as giving me the least *Notice* of it? *Cruel!* Could you resolve to leave me to *Despair* and to *Endless Misery*, without expressing the least *Concern* for me? And can I persist in loving one so Ingrateful? *Is* there such another Ingrateful Creature *alive*? No, there *never* was so *Ingrateful* a Creature, but there *never* was not one so *Charming*.

*Dear Madam,*

CAN you be angry *still* with your Poor Penitent? You cannot have the *Ill-Nature* sure. *Yes*, but you can, you say, since he could have the Presumption to be angry with you. But, *My Dearest*, there is *this* Difference betwixt *your* Anger and *my Mine* was caus'd by the Cruelty of your suppos'd Infidelity, and *Yours* by the Kindness of your *Lover*'s Resentment: For if I had not been *Fond* of *thee* to the last *degree*, I had not been so Incens'd against you. Yet even when I was most so, I could sooner have pluck'd out an *Eye*, than have resolved to have *Parted* with thee. Nay, I could sooner have torn out *both* Eyes, if the Loss of *both* would not have *for ever* deprived me of the *Dear*, the *Ravishing* sight of *thee*. But if you still think that my Anger *had* Guilt in it, and that I ought to suffer for it, the means to punish me with *utmost* Severity, and to make me my *own* Tormentor, is to tell me, you *Love* me; Then I shall *Curse* my self and my Rage, and feel *all* the *Plague* of Remorse for having

ving offended thee. I shall look upon my self as the *Basest*, the most *Ungrateful* of *Men* for abusing thy Goodness, and thy *Charming* Tenderness. I shall believe that I can *never* humble my self enough, and *never* suffer enough to *deserve* Forgiveness. Thus, Madam, you have your *Revenge* in your *Power*: It is a *False Modesty* which restrains you from taking it. In order to it you have nothing to do, but to prove your self *tender*, and to shew your self *Ungrateful*. If you must be *asham'd*, blush at your *Cruelty*; blush at your *Inhumanity*: Let your *Gratitude* is *Reason*, and *Love* is *Nature*, never be asham'd of *these*. Do but *consider*, there *was* a time, when I was happy in your Esteem; yes there *has* been a time, in which I was thought not *altogether* Worthless by you. How then can you *Blush* at the owning a Passion, which you *Commanded* with an *absolute* Sway, at the very time that it *Tyrannized* over me.

*Dear Madam,*

MY Friend's stratagem gave me an opportunity of seeing you by finding Pastime with you. It must proceed from *Design* or *Madness* if I find fault with those Thy Lovely Face is the very *flame* that fir'd all my Blood in a *Flame*; and I am sure my *Heart* can *never* be alter'd. How it *trembled* in my Breast when I saw you last, and by its *trouble* confess'd its Conqueror. How it has *burnt* ever since with *redoubled Fury*! When I shall be *free* from this *Flame* Heaven only knows, for the House of my *Death* Heaven only knows. 'Tis a Flame that has incorporated with that of my *Life*, and *both* will go out together. *In vain* I invoke my *Reason* to resist my *Senses*. My *Reason* finds you more *Lovely* than my *Eyes* did *before*; shews me *all* the Graces of thy *beauteous Mind*, and grows *pleas'd* and *prides* it self in its *own* Captivity. You accuse me, they say, of some extraordinary *Crime*. A *Crime* against *whom*? Against you whom I *love*! Against you, for whom I could *die*!

*Strange*

*Strange Accusation!* Yet at the same time you refuse to see me, you refuse to receive my Letters: And must I be condemn'd *Unheard?* *Robbers* are allow'd to *speak* before they are sentenc'd: *Murderers* have the Privilege to *plead* for their Lives: And shall the *Tenderest Love* be denied the Privilege which is granted to the *Blackest Malice?* I have been guilty of nothing but too much *Love* if too much *Love*, be a *Fault*. Why have you given credit to my *Enemies*, before you have heard me? I may indeed be convinc'd of an *Error*, but I can never be convicted of a *Crime* against you. The Man must be *Mad*, nay, *desperately Mad*, who can design to injure *himself*, and *Thou* art, by much the *Better*, the *Dearer* part of me. Give me leave to see you once more before I depart. Let me see *once* more that Face which has *Undone* me, yet *Charms* me even in *Ruine*.

O Face industriously *contriv'd by Heaven*,
*To fix my* Eyes, *and captivate my Soul!*

---

Nay, I *will* see you, if it be but to upbraid you with your *barbarous* Wish. If at the time that you made it, you had struck

a *Dagger* in my *Heart*, you had given it a *Gentler* wound.

The only *Wish* that *I* have to *make* is to be happy in thee; if that succeeds not, I have another, and that is, to lye at *rest* in my *Grave*.

*The End of the Love Letters.*

## *To Mr.* ——

*Sir,*

I Received yours, which was the more Welcome, because it came without Invitation. I take it very kindly that you would write to me, more kindly than if you had made me a Present: For we certainly shew most Kindness for any one, in that which we do for him contrary to the Bent of our Natural Tempers. Now I have observed that you have been constantly less inclin'd to shew your Parts than your Generosity. At the very time that you have been Prodigal of Self, you have been a Niggard of Wit. By a Greatness of Mind you have squander'd the first, as a very worthless thing; and by a just Discernment been thrifty of the last, as a very valuable Treasure. But your Letter has given me some hopes, that you begin to take the Advice which I have so often given you; and that is, that for the Conveniency of Life, you would grow a little more frugal

gal of Gold, and a little more free of your Sense. And I begin to imagine that you have till now been covetous of the Latter, only because you were laying in a Stock, that for the time to come you may be never without the Ready. I was sorry to hear my Friend —— Quibble, tho, to give the Devil his Due, it was not the worst that ever I heard. But I was in hopes that Quibbles and Puns, might have been cry'd down with the White Farthings. And I have been credibly inform'd that *Will Irwin* has refus'd to take *Cannudrums* of S—— for *Usquebaugh* any longer; tho one would Swear that Irish Wit might go for Irish Liquor. I wish you had sent me some more News, tho I can make you but small Return *in specie*. My humble Service to Mr. *Congreve*, tell him that I wish him good Luck, and expect that he should reconcile Fortune to Merit.

*Dec.* 6, 1694.

*I am,*

*Yours, &c.*

## *To Mr.* ——

*Dear* ——

Thou it seems hast a mind to pass for a Wit, by the very same means that *Jack-Daw* thought fit to set up for a *Beau*. (By the way I must tell you, that the Transformation of Beau to Wit, has something more of the Miracle in it, than the change of *Jack-daw* to *Beau*.) *B*——, with borrow'd plumes hast thou imp'd thy wings. But I took more particular notice of a couple, that were pluck'd from a certain Bird of night; which if we give Credit to *W*—— the knower is a very filthy obscene Animal; from which ominous Creature, may Heav'n defend us. Mortals, that is, we in the Country here, call him *Bell*, but the Gods, that is, those in *Covent-Garden*, have named him *Break-day*. But it is time to begin to speak plain English, for you, if I am not mistaken, pretend to no other Language. But then,

as

as you have writ for the Witty Club, the Witty Club may understand for you. I look upon your last to be the Act and Deed of them all. And you shall henceforward be Secretary to them, as *Julian* was to their Mistresses. Tho I must tell you by the way, that the Affection which some of them show for the Muses, is not unlike the merry passion, which put the little French Parson into an Amourous Fit for the Queen. Return them all thanks in my name, for the Honour they have done me, in offering to admit me in my ablence, a Member of their Noble Society. But, *Domine, non sum Dignus.* However, I think my self obliged to make them as extraordinary a Compliment, as the *Morocco* Ambassador would have thought himself engaged to return the University of *Oxford*, if in the midst of their extream civility, they had offered to make him *D. D.* But to speak to that part of your Letter which concerns your self. I do not wonder, that you go to the Play-house only for the sake of your Mistress; but methinks, at the Musick-meeting the Italians Voice might have Charms for you. But as you go thither too, you say, only for the sake of your Mistress, I will believe to oblige you, that she does not go for the Eunuch's. Now I go to your Comedy here,

purely

purely for the Comedy sake, which is a Musick Country Club; and partly for the Musick sake I go to our Musick-meeting, which is a pack of Shrill mouth'd Beagles for Trebles, and a pack of deep mouth'd Bumkins for Bases. And whenever our Consort begins, half the Men in *Bucks*, in sight of their Souls, are our Audience. Once more I salute the Witty Club. Tell them, that they little deserve that name, if they have not more Wit, than to take any thing ill *I* have said. Assure them, that I know how to respect their Good Qualities, and that I shall endeavour to set of their Bad, which is a Friends part.

*I am*

*Dear* ——

*Yours, &c.*

*Postscript.*

In your first Letter you gave me notice of some Gentlemen who designed to write to me. The Post before that, I had a very

Witty

very Witty Letter from one of them. It is no hard matter to guess that it was from Mr. *Wycherly*. But *Ch*——Wit, if he ever any, either went astray or came short. Who should wonder at either;

## *To* Walter Moyle, *Esq;* *at* Bake *in* Cornwall.

*Dear Sir,*

YOUR long silence made me Conjecture, that you are so intent upon being Burgess of *Bodmyn*, that you had forgot the Citizens of *Covent-Garden*. At last I received an agreeable Letter from you. You had best have a care of talking in *Cornwall*, at the rate that you write to your Friends. If you do, the *Cornish-men* may not think you rightly Qualified to Represent them. When you left the Town, you talk'd of a Critical Correspondence between us. But idleness on your side, and ill humour on mine, have baulked a very hopeful design. But an accident has lately happened, which obliges me to provoke you. For there has just been a Play

Acted

Acted, called *The Mock-Marriage*, the Author of which, whose name I have forgot, asserts Dogmatically in his Preface, that he who writes by rule shall only have his Labour for his Pains. I know not what this Author can mean by this. For, whom does he pretend to perswade by this fine assertion? Not Mr. *Boyle*, and me at least. We know indeed very well, that a Man may write regularly, and yet fail of pleasing; and that a Poet may please in a play that is not regular. But this is Eternally true, that he who writes regularly *ceteris paribus*, must always please more, than he who transgresses the rules. Nothing can please in a Play but Nature, no not in a Play which is written against the Rules; and the more there is of Nature in any Play, the more that Play must Delight. Now the Rules are nothing but an observation of Nature. For Nature is Rule to Order it self. There is not one of the Rules but what might be us'd to evince this. But I shall be contented with showing some instances of it, even in the Mechanick Rules of the Unities. And first for that of place; it is certain that it is in Nature impossible, for a Man who is in the Square in *Covent Garden*, to see the things, that at the same time are transacted at *Westminster*.

And

And then for that of Time, a Reasonable Man may delude himself so far as to fancy that he sits for the space of twelve hours, without removing, Eating or Sleeping, but he must be a Devil that can fancy he does it for a Week. What I have said may evince a necessity of observing the Unities of Time and of Place, if a Poet would throughly write up to Nature. And then the Unity of Action follows on course. For, that two Actions that are Entire, and Independent, should happen in the same short space of time, in the same little compass of Place, begin together, go on together, and end together, without Obstructing or Confounding one another, this indeed may be done upon the Stage, but in Nature it is highly improbable. Well then, since the Rules are nothing but Nature it self, and and nothing but Nature can please, and and since the more that any Play has of Nature, the more that Play must Delight, it follows, that a Play which is regularly Written, *ceteris Paribus*, must please more than a Play which is written against the Rules, which is a Demonstration. Rule may be said to be a Play; what Symmetry of parts is known to be to a Face? The Features may be Regular, and yet a Great or a Delicate air may be wanting. And there

may

may be a Commanding or Engaging air, in a Face whose Features are not Regular. But this all the World must allow of, that there can never be seen any Sovereign Beauty, where air and Regularity of Features are not United. Thus is Reason against this Author, but the mischief is, that experience is against him too. For all your Dramatick Poets must confess, that the Plays which they have writ with most Regularity, have been they which have pleased most. I must trouble you with another Dramatical Criticism, but not till the next opportunity.

*Iam Yours, &c.*

*London, Oct. 26. 95.*

## *Mr.* ——— *to Mr.* Congreve.

*Dear Sir,*

I Came home from the *Lands-End* Yesterday, where I found Three Letters from Mr. *Dennis*, and one from you with a humerous Description of *John Abaſſus*, since the dubbing of *Don Quixote*; and the Coronation of *Petrarch* in the *Capitol*, where has not been so great a Solemnity as the Consecration of *John Abaſſus*. In all the Pagan Ritual, I never met with the Form of Poetical Orders; but I believe the Ceremony of Consecrating a Man to *Apollo*, is the same with devoting a Man to the *Dii Manes*, for both are Martyrs to Fame. I believe not a Man of the *Grave-Club* durst assist at this ridiculous Scene, for fear of laughing out-right. *W.* was in his Kingdom, and for my part I would have rather sate there than in the House of Commons. Would to God I could laugh with you for one hour or two at all the

*A Country Poet.*



To go after Page 128.

the ridiculous things that have happen'd at *Wills Coffee-House* since I left it, 'tis the merriest place in the World. Like *Africa*, every day it produces a Monster; and they are got there just as *Pliny* says they are in *Africa*, Beasts of different kinds come to drink, mingle with one another and beget Monsters. Present my humble Duty to my new Lord, and tell him, that I am preparing an Address to Congratulate his Accession to the Throne of the Rabble. Tell the Lady who was the Author of the *Hue* and *Cry* after me, she might have sent out a hundred *Hues* and *Crys* before she would have found a Poet. I took an effectual Course not to be apprehended for a Poet, for I went down clad like a Soldier, with a new Suit of Cloaths on, and, I think there could not have been a better Disguise for a Poet, unless I had stol'n D-- *B*------'s Coat. Mr. *Dennis* sent me down *P*----- *M*----- Parodie. I can say very little of the *Poem*, but as for the *Dialogue*, I think, 'twas the first time that *M*------ suffered any body to talk with him, though indeed here he inertupts Mr. *Boileau* in the midst of the first word. My humble Service to Mr. *Wycherly*, I desire you would write me some News of

the

the Stage, and what Progress you have made in your Tragedy.

*October* 7. 95.

*I am,*

*Your affectionate Friend*

*and Servant,*

## *Mr.* Congreve *to Mr.* -----

*Dear Sir,*

I Can't but think, that a Letter from me in *London*, to you in *C*—— is like ſome ancient Correſpondence between an Inhabitant of *Rome* and a *Cimmerian*. May be, my way of Writing may not be ſo modeſtly compared with *Roman* Epiſtles; but the reſemblance of the Place will juſtify the other part of the Parallel. The Subterraneous Habitations of the Miner, and the Proximity of the *Bajæ* help a little: and while you are at *B*- let *B*- be *Cumæ*, and do you ſupply the Place of *Sybilla*. You may look on this as raillery, but I can aſſure you, nothing leſs than Oracles are expected from you, in the next Parliment, if you ſucceed in your Election, as we are pretty well aſſured you will. You wiſh your ſelf, with us at *Wills Coffee-houſe*; and all here wiſh for you, from the preſident of the Grave Club, to the moſt puny Member of the Rabble; they who can think

think, think of you, and the reſt talk of you. There is no ſuch Monſter in this *Africa*, that is not ſenſible of your abſence; even the worſt natured People, and thoſe of leaſt Wit lament it, I mean, Half Criticks and Quiblers. To tell you all that want you, I ſhould name all the Creatures of *Covent-Garden*, wich like thoſe of *Eden-garden* would want ſome *Adam* to be a Godfather and give them Names. I can't tell whether I may juſtly compare our *Covent-garden*, to that of *Eden*, or no; for tho' I believe we may have variety of Strange Animals equal to *Paradiſe*, yet I fear we have not amongſt us, the *Tree* of *Knowlege*. It had been much to the diſadvantage of *Pliny*, had the *Coffee-houſe* been in his days; for ſure he would have deſcribed ſome who frequent it; which would have given him, the reputation of a more fabulous Writer then he has now. But being in our age it does him a Service, for we who know it, can give faith to all his Monſters. You who took care to go down into the Country unlike a Poet, I hope will take care not to come up again like a Politician; for then, you will add a new Monſter to the *Coffee-houſe*, that was never ſeen there before. So you may come back again, in your Souldiers Coat, for

in that you will no more be suspected for a Polititian, than a Poet. Pray come upon any terms, for you are wished for by every body, but most wanted by your

*Affectionate Friend*

*Will's Coffee-house,*
*August 13. 95.*

*and Servant,*

*W.* Congreve.

*Mr.*

## *Mr.* R—. *to Mr.* C—.

*Dear Tom.*

I Receiv'd your Letter, and give you thanks for your News. In requital I shall send you some concerning our Friend: In doing which, I comply both with his desire and yours. He has been sick almost ever since he came hither, tho, excepting once, he has liv'd with exact Regularity. He says, he believes the Devil restrain'd his Surfeit from breaking out till he was reconcil'd to Sobriety, to render it odious, and set them afresh at varience. I remember when I was at *Paris*; there was a Young-Nun, whose Circumstances in some measure resembled our Friends. She had a Pox broke out upon her immediate after she had taken her Vow of Chastity. He bids me tell you, that he has been once Drunk since he came to this place, and once witty, and a damnable Sot ever since. Our Friend, I suppose, rallies. But one thing is certain; that Wine is as sure to exalt Wit, as Paint is to heighten Beauty, but then as the Devil will have it (hearken to this and tremble *Tom*) they both decay the very things they embellish, even while they are giving them

Luſtre. But *Tom*, he bids me tell you, yo
muſt not believe him vain becauſe he ſa
he was witty. For he ſays it was among
ſuch prodigious Squires, that none but a S
would have been witty in ſuch Compan
Our Friend, methinks, has reaſon. For
is as much more ſcandalous to be wit
with Fools, than it is to be dull among
Men of wit, as an Error in Judgment
more ridiculous than a Defect in Fancy. H
ſays, he has a hundred times ſince he ca
to this place regretted the Rabble, nay, h
has regretted the *Grave Club*; Nay, he h
wiſhed himſelf even in the *Witty Cl*
which he believes is by this time erect
He begins to look upon *Ball*— as a gr
Man, upon *Jack G.*— as a Prodigy, an
upon W— as a Demi-god. Indeed a day
we do well enough here. For a days we
converſe with the living dead; that is, with
thoſe who being dead yet ſpeak: but th
Night, *Tom*, the Night, in which we are
doom'd to the dead living, that is, to thoſe
who being alive, ſay nothing, is inſupport-
ably irkſome, Darkneſs in *Greenland* is no
more grievous to the Wretch that is bo
there, than it is diſmal to us in *Bucks*.

*I am yours.*

*Jan.* 10. 93.

To

## *To Mr.* Gabriel B--

*Dear* Gabriel,

WHen thy last was written, thou hadst put on the Lyons Skin, and, mad'st a wonderful Comical Figure in it. But I did not think to incense thee, nor the rest of the Rabble, quite contrary I thought to divert you. You say, you take it ill, that I should upbraid you with Understanding no Language but *English*. Why, what a Pagan Apprehension hast thou *Gabriel*? The Devil a jot did I upbraid thee. Quite contrary, I commended thee for being willing to understand no Language but plain *English*. And that as I take it, has quite a different meaning. With what unreasonable Wights have I had to do? Who are offended at my endeavour to please them, and take my Commendations for Injuries. I am accus'd, you say, of ill Breeding for that Letter. Why, Prethee, *Gabriel*, every Man has not had the Breeding that thou hast. I wish you had sent me the Names of the Sparks who would reconcile Punctilio to Satyr. It has been a damn'd inveterate Quarrel, and requires wise Mediators.

But

But now I talk of Satyr, that you ſay is the Diſeaſe of ſome Peoples Minds. Alas, poor Devil, thou doeſt not know that it is a Maxim in Phyſick, that ſome Diſeaſes ſhew the Health and Strength, and Vigour of the Party affected. If we believe *Hyppocrates*, Hunger is a Diſeaſe; nay reaſon tells us the ſame thing. For like other Diſtempers, it ſhews a defect in Nature. But where it ſhews a defect it ſhews a force too, and when that Diſeaſe is pretty acute, the Patient is ſure to do well, I will let the Application alone. For in writing to one of thy Communicative Spirit, a Man is ſure to write to ſome body who can underſtand. But this I will ſay, that if Satyr be a Diſeaſe, the acuter it is, the better. But why do I talk of Diſeaſes to thee? For indeed *Gabriel* (without Satyr) thou art no Phyſitian.

I am, *&c.*

To

## *To Mr.* Congreve *at* Tunbridge.

*Dear Sir.*

MY Buſineſs and my Thanks for your Kindneſs, you will find in the enclos'd, which I had ſent by the laſt Poſt, had not an Accident hinder'd it. All the Return that I can make you at preſent is, to acquaint you with ſuch News as we have. Our Friend, Mr. ——— went laſt Friday to the *Bath*. He promis'd to write to me from that place, but it would be unreaſonable indeed to expect it. For *W*—— takes up his Afternoons, and his Mornings, I ſuppoſe, are ſpent in Contemplation at the *Croſs Bath*. Moſt of your Friends of the *Coffee-Houſe* are diſper'd; Some are retreated into the Country in hopes of ſome Favours, which they expect from the *Muſes:* Two or Three of them are retir'd in Town to ruminate on ſome Favours, which they have receiv'd from their Miſtreſſes.

So that the *Coffee-Houſe* is like to grow into Reputation again. For if any one gives it the ſcandalous Denomination of the

the *Wits Coffee-House*, he must call it so by Antiphrasis, because there comes no Wit there. Here are two or three indeed, who set up for Wits at home, and endeavour so pass for wise at the Coffee-House. For they hold their Tongues there. Indeed the Coffee-House is generally the Exchange for Wit, where the Merchants meet without bringing the Commodity with them, which they leave at home in their Ware-houses, alias their Closets, while they go abroad to take a prudent care for the vending it. But you are of the number of those happy few, who abound in Hereditary Possessions and rich returns from *Greece* and from *Italy*, that you always carry some of it about you to be liberal to your Friends of that which you sell to Strangers. Mr. -- babbles eternally according to his old rate, and as extravagantly as if he talk'd to himself, which he certainly does, if no body minds him any more than I do. He has been just now enquiring of me, what sort of Distemper the Spleen is; an infallible sign that he is the only Man in *Covent-Garden*, who does not know he is an Ass. To make him sensible what the Spleen is, I could find in my heart to shew him himself and give it him. If any thing restrains me from being

being reveng'd of his Impertinence this way, 'tis the Conſideration that it will make him wiſer. This Coxcomb naturally puts me in mind of the Stage, where they have lately acted ſome new Plays; but had there been more of them, I would not ſcruple to affirm, that the Stage is at preſent a Deſart and a barren place, as ſome part of *Africa* is ſaid to be, though it abounds in Monſters. And yet thoſe prodigious Things have met with Succeſs. For a Fool is naturally fond of a Monſter, becauſe he is incapable of knowing a Man. While you drink ſteel for your Spleen at *Tunbridge*, I partake of the benefit of the Courſe. For the gaiety of your Letters relieves me conſiderably. Then what muſt your Converſation do? Come up and make the Experiment; and impart that Vigour to me which *Tunbridge* has reſtor'd to you.

*I am your moſt humble*

*Servant,*

John Dennis.

## *Mr.* ---- *to Mr.* Dennis.

NAmur taken, and a Letter from Mr. *Dennis*, were two of the moſt agreeable Surprizes I ever met with. And nothing but the Reflection, how dear the Conqueſt will coſt us, I mean, the innumerable ill Poems it will produce, could allay the Pleaſure. *A*-- has watch'd for a Victory a long time, and will not miſs this Oppertunity to mortify the Day of Thankſgiving, and Scribble a way the publick Joy. The Devil take *Wills Coffe-houſe*. I could be the eaſieſt Man in the World under my Calamity, if it were not for ſome of the Company there; who are now the greateſt Enemies I have in the World, worſe than the Company from which I am juſt now Stol'n to write this Letter. Among the reſt is a Country Gentleman who dictates Politicks abundantly, for with us as well, as at Old *Rome* we take Dictators from the Plow, but ours are ſuch as ought never to remove their Hands from it.

*I am yours*, &c.

*Mr.*

## *Mr.* —— *to Mr.* Dennis,

WHile you are happy in the Politicks of the Grave Club,* and the Puns of the Rabble, you have no regard to the forlorn State of your poor Friend. Before I left *London*, I fained an hundred agreeable Melancholy Pleasures, with which I might Fool away a Retirement, but now I detest being alone, and question whither Mankind or Solitude be the fitter Subject for a Satyr. Of this, I am sure, that God Allmighty rather than be alone Created the Devil, and Man rather than be alone chose a Wife. Whatever advantage I have lost by my Country Life, I believe, I have gain'd the gift of Prophesy in the Wilderness, for I foretold the Poem with which *A*-- has visited us.

*I am*

*yours*, &c.

* *Two Covent-garden* Clubs.

*To*

## *Mr.* —— *to Mr.* Dennis.

TO your Buſineſs hereafter, but firſt lets have a Dance, as Mr. *Bays* ſays. When I came home from the Weſt, where I had paſſed a Fortnight, I found your three Letters full of Wit and Humor. I was charm'd with the Scandal you writ in the firſt, and encloſed in the laſt, *viz. A*'s Poem. I found the Preamble before the Poem to be like a Suterkin before a *Dutch* Child. I read it over in great haſte, in hopes to be pleaſed at laſt with the end of it, but this is the firſt time I ever diſlik'd his Concluſion. For he threatens ſtrange things. I hope, 'tis only *in terrorem*, if not, I hope God in his goodneſs will ſend us a Peace, and prevent his Songs of Triumph. Certainly, ſince the Devil was Dumb there never was ſuch a Poet.

* Note, That whereas in ſome of the laſt Letters, there is found this Mark *A*'s, the Letter *A* is not ſet for the firſt Letter of the Man's own Name, but of his *Nom de Guerre*, which is remarked to prevent a Miſtake, becauſe a very Ingenious Gentleman, whoſe Name begins with *A* has lately written a Poem upon the Taking of *Namur*.

## A Dedication designed to the Volunteers.

### By Mr. Shadwell.

### To the QUEEN.

*Written By Mr.* Dennis.

*Madam,*

I Presume to lay at your Majesty's Feet this last Poem, which was written by my deceas'd Husband. The Obligations which he had to the King and Your Majesty are of that high Nature, that all I can do, is to take this Occasion of Humbly acknowledging the Mighty Debt. My Husband so truly Honour'd You living, that if he has now any Sense of what is done here below, I cannot do a more grateful thing for him, than in giving him an opportu-

nity of appearing before You after his Death, and entertaining you in a Form which I hope will not seem frightful to you. I have often heard him say in his life time that Wit, wherever it grows in your Majesty's Dominions, ought, no less than Silver or Gold to be a Royal Mine, unless as it happen'd lately in *Wales*, the Noble Ore has too great a mixture of baser Metal. That Wit, which is nothing but Gay Wisdom, is no less than Gold Subservient to Government, and when it is made current by the Royal Stamp, contributes no less to the Publick Prosperity. That the end of the *Drama* was to reform mankind, which as Tragedy attain'd by purging the passions, Comedy arriv'd at by Correcting the Humours, which tho they may not lead Men into great Crimes immediately, yet when they are irregular, they most certainly prepare the way to them. That Comedy never fails to make a good Subject whenever it makes a good Man. That more particularly, the Humours which are expos'd in this Comedy, were at this Conjuncture utterly inconsistent with the Duty of a good Subject. That the Vicious Follies of these times were very prejudicial to your Majesty's Service. That the Affections of *France*, had done *England* more harm

harm than all its Machivillian Principles. That where these last had made ten bad Subjects, by rendering them Interested or Discontented, the former had made a Hundred by making them Fops and Beaus. 'English Gentlemen he us'd to say, in the times of our Brave Ancestors, were always the Flower of *English* Armies, in times, when to die bravely in the Service of King and Country, was esteem'd a desirable Fate, and more than Recompenc'd with Eternal Fame. But now said he, our Gentlemen either go not to the Wars, or if they go, they very often make us heartily wish that they had staid at home. What indeed can be expected from a degenerate Race, whose worthiest Ambition is either to be Wicked with a good Grace, or to be dextrously Foppish? Who emulating one another spend their live times in dressing, to see who shall run away with the Immortal Reputation of having the profoundest Capacity for a *Valet de Chambre*. He has often told me, that the design of this Comedy was to reclaim them, if they were not incorrigible, and that what was writ with such an immediate regard to your Majesty's Service, should be *Dedicated* to none but your Majesty. According to his intention, I here with all Humility Present it to you.

You, Madam, who have so much of Heaven in you, will, like that, accept this offering from me, tho it was yours before, and tho it is made by a Disconsolate Widow. Yes, Madam, your Universal goodness, your Clemency and Compassion on all in Affliction give me Assurance that you will accept it. Qualities, for which you are so Renown'd, that I have often heard these Noble Verses of *Waller* very justly apply'd to your Majesty.

*All her Affections are to one inclin'd,*
*Her Bounty and Compassion to Mankind;*
*To whom while she so far extends her Grace,*
*She makes but good the promise of her Face.*
*For Mercy has (could Mercy's self be seen)*
*No Sweeter look than this Propitious Queen.*
*So the fair Tree, on which the Eagle builds,*
*Poor Sheep from Tempests, and their Shepherds*
*(Shields.*
*The Royal Bird possesses all the Boughs,*
*But Shade and Shelter to the Flock allows.*

This, Madam, is the language of the Gods, applyed to so Divine a Subject, that nothing but the Language of Gods, can

expres

express it with Dignity. And therefore your Majesty will have no Patience to hear me speak, after one who can speak so well.

*I am,*

*Your Majesty's*

*Most Humble and*

*Devoted Subject*

*and Servant,*

A. Shadwell.

expects it with Dignity. And therefore
your Majesty will have no Patience to hear
me speak, after one who can speak to
well.

# Sele& Letters
## OF
# VOITURE.

*The First, Translated*

*By Mr.* DRYDEN.

*And the rest*

*By Mr.* DENNIS.

*To my Lord*

## Cardinal *de la* VALETTE.

*My Lord*,

I Am satisfy'd, that you Old Cardinals take more Authority upon you, than those of the last Promotion; because, having written many Letters to you, without receiving one from you, yet you complain of my Neglect. In the mean time, seeing so many well-bred Men, who assure me that you do me too much Honour to think of me at all; and that I am bound to write to you, and to give my Acknowledgments, I am resolved to take their Counsel, and to pass over all sorts of Difficulties and Considerations of my own Interest. This then will give you to understand, that six days after the Eclipse, and a Fortnight after my Decease, Madam the Princess, Mademoiselle

de Bourbon, Madam du Vigean, Madam Avery, Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, Mademoiselle Paulet, Monsieur de Chandebonne, and my self, left Paris about six in the Evening, and went to La Barre, where Madam du Vigean was to give a Collation to the Princess. In our way thither we found nothing worth our Observation; but only that at Ormesson, an English Mastiff came up to the Boot of the Coach, to make his Compliment to me. Be pleased to take this along with you, My Lord, that as often as I express my self in the Plural Number, as for Example, We went, we found, or We beheld, 'tis always to be Understood, that I speak in the Quality of a Cardinal. From thence we happily arriv'd at La Barre, and enter'd a Hall, where we trod upon nothing but Roses and Orange-Flowers. Madam the Princess, after she had sufficiently admir'd the Magnificence, had a mind to see the Walks before Supper: The Sun was then just setting in a Cloud of Gold and Azure, and gave us no larger a share of his Beams, than to supply a Soft and Pleasing Light. The Air was not disturb'd either with Wind or Heat; and it seem'd that Heav'n and Earth were conspiring with Madam du Vigean, in her Treating the Fairest Princess upon Earth. After she had passed through

a great Parterre, and Gardens full of *Orange* Trees, she arrived at the Entrance of an Enchanted Wood, so thick and shady, that Authors conclude the Sun, since the Day of his Birth, never enter'd it, till now that he waited on her Highness thither. At the end of an Alley, which carried the sight out of distance, we found a Fountain, which alone cast up a greater Quantity of Water than all those of *Tivoli* together. About it were plac'd four and twenty Violins, which had much ado to make themselves be heard, for the rumbling of the Stream in falling. When we were got near enough, we discover'd in a certain Nich within a Pallisade, a *Diana*, of about Eleven or Twelve Years of Age, and fairer than the Forests of *Greece* and *Thessaly* have ever seen. She bore her Bow and Arrows in her Eyes, and was encompass'd with all the Glories of her Brother. In another Nich, not far distant, was another Nymph Fair and Gentile enough to pass for one of her Train: Those who are not given to believe Fables, took them for Mademoiselle *de Bourbon* and *la Vrilliere*; and to confess the Truth, they resembled them exactly. All the Company was in a profound Silence admiring so many different Objects, which at once astonish'd their Eyes and Ears,

when on a Sudden the Goddess leapt down from her Nich; and with a Grace, impossible to be describ'd, began a Ball, which lasted for some time about the Fountain. 'Twas somewhat strange, My Lord, that in the midst of so many pleasures, which were sufficient to ingage the whole attention of their Spirits, who enjoy'd them, yet we could not forbear to think of you; and it was generally concluded, that something was wanting to our Happiness, since neither you, nor Madam *de Rambouillet* were present. Then I took up a Harp and Sung this Spanish Stanza;

*Pues quiso mi suerte dura,*
*Que faltando mi sennor*
*Tambien faltasse mi Dama.*

And continued the rest of the Song so very Melodiously, and with such an Air of Sadness, that there was not one of the Company, but the Tears came into their Eyes, and they wept abundantly. Their sorrow had endur'd much longer, had not the Violins struck up a Sarabrand, with great speed and presence of Mind. Upon which the Company got upon their Feet, with as much Gayety, as if nothing in the World had happen'd, and fell into the Dance; thus Leaping, Capring, turning Round, and Hopping, we returned to the House,

where

where we found a Table already Spread and serv'd as if it had been serv'd by Fairies. This, My Lord, is one passage of the Adventure, which is so stupendous that no words are capable of expressing it. For there are neither colours of Speech, nor Figures in the Art of Rhetoric, which can describe six several sorts of Potages, which were at once presented to the Sight. And what was particularly remarkable, that there being none but Goddesses, and two Demi-Gods at the Table, (viz.) Monsieur *Chandebonne* and I, yet every one eat it heartily, and with as good Appetites, as if we had been neither more nor less, than plain Mortals. And to confess the Truth, a better Treat could not have been provided. Amongst other things, there were twelve Dishes, besides other Eatables in disguise, which were never seen before on any Humane Table: and whose very names have never been so much as mention'd in any History. This Circumstance, My Lord, by some disastrous accident, has been related to Madam *La Mareschalle*——— And though immediately upon it, she took twelve Drams of *Opium*, beyond her ordinary Dose; yet she has never been able to close her Eyes, from that fatal Moment. During the first Course, there was not so much

much as one single Cup went round to your Health; the Company was so intent upon the present Affair; and at the Desert, we quite forgot it. I beg your permission, My Lord, to relate all things as they pass'd; like a Faithful Historian as I am, and without Flattery; For I would not for the World, that Posterity should mistake one thing for another; and that at the end of two thousand years hence, or thereabouts, Posterity should imagine your Health was drunk, when really there was no such thing in Nature. Yet I must give this testimony to Truth, that it was not for want of Memory. For, during all Supper time, you were often mention'd. All the Ladies wish'd you there, and some of them very heartily, or I am much mistaken. As we rose from Table, the Sound of the Violins summon'd us up Stairs, where we found a Chamber so gloriously lighted up, that it look'd as if the Day, which was now below the Earth, had retired hither, and was assembled in one body of Light. Here the Ball began again, in better order and with more grace, than it had been danc'd about the Fountain. And the most Magnificent Part of it, my Lord, was, that I footed it there in Person. Mademoiselle *de Bourbon*, I must confess, was of opinion, that I

Danc'd

Duke'd awkwardly; but he concluded, to my advantage, that I must be allowed to Fence well; because, that at the end of every Cadence, I put my self upon my Guard. The Ball continued with much Pleasure, when all of a sudden a great Noise which was heard without Doors, caused the Company to look out at the Windows. Where from a great Wood, which was about three hundred Paces from the House, we beheld so vast a Number of Fire-Works issuing out, that we verily believ'd all the Branches and Trunks of the Trees had been Metamorphos'd into Guns. That all the Stars were falling from the Firmament, and that the Element of Fire, was descending into the Middle Region of the Air. Here, My Lord, are three Hyperboles rack'd together, which being valued at a moderate Price, are worth three dozen of Fusees at the least. After we were recover'd out of this great fit of Extasie into which so many Miracles had plung'd us, we resolved on our Departure; and took the way to *Paris* by the Light of twenty Flambeaux. We pass'd through all the *Ormessonnois*, and the wide Plains of *Espinay*, without resistance, and went through the middle of St. *Denis*. Being plac'd in the Coach by the side of Madam——— said a whole *Miserere* to her, on your behalf;

half; to which she replied, with much Gallantry, and no less Civility. We sung all our Journey a World of Songs, Rondeaux, Roundelays, Lampoons, and Ballads; and were now half a League beyond St. *Dennis*, it being two a Clock in the Morning precisely; the Fatigue of the Journey, Watching, Walking, and the painful Exercise of the Ball, having made me somewhat heavy, when there happen'd an Accident, which I verily believ'd would have been my total Ruine. There is a certain little Village, situate, say the Geographers, betwixt *Paris* and St. *Dennis*, and vulgarly called, *La Valette*. At our going out of this Place, we overtook three Coaches, in which were those Numerical Violins which had been playing to us. Hereupon, *Sathan* entring into the Spirit of Mademoiselle, she commanded them to follow us, and to give Serenades all Night long to the Poor innocent People of *Paris* who were asleep and dreamt not of her Malice. This Diabolical Proposition, made my Hair rise an end upon my Head: Yet all the Company paid a Vote in Favour of it; and the word was just ready to be given, but by a Signal Providence, they had left their Violins behind them at *la Barre*; for which the Lord reward them. From hence, my Lord, you

may

may reasonably conclude, that Mademoiselle is a dangerous Person in the Night, ever there was any in the World? And that I had great reason at Madam ——'s House to say, that the Violins ought to be turn'd out of doors, when that Pestilent Lady was in Company. Well, we continued our way happily enough, but only till we enter'd the *Faubourgs*, we met a lusty Fellows, as Naked as ever they were Born, who passed directly by the Coach to the terror of the Ladies. In fine, we arrived at *Paris*, and what I am now going to relate, is indeed Prodigious. Can you imagine it, My Lord? the Obscurity was so great, that it cover'd all that Vast City. And instead of what we left it, at full seven hours before, fill'd with Noise and with a Crowd of Men, Women, Horses and Coaches; we now found nothing but a deep Silence, a dismal Desart, a frightful Solitude, dispeopled Streets, not meeting with any Mortal Man; but only certain Animals, who fled from the Lustre of our Torches. But the remaining part of this Adventure, you shall have, My Lord, another time. As *Boyardo* tells you,

*Qui è il fin del Canto; e torno ad Orlando*
*Adio Signor, a voi me raccomando.*

## To Mademoiselle Pauler.

*Madam*,

O great a Misfortune as mine wanted no less Consolation than that which I lately received from you, and I look'd on your Letter, as a Pardon which Heav'n granted me after my Sentence. I can call it no other name, the News which oblig'd me to return to this Place, and I can assure you that a sentence of Death is oftentimes less rigorous. But since in the midst of all my Misfortunes, I have the honour to be remember'd by you, to complain would be ill-becoming of me: For methinks he may dispense with the Favours of Fortune, who is happy enough to obtain yours. This is the Reason that I shall make use of to comfort my self, for the Necessity of remaining here, and not that which you urg'd in yours, That it is better to be an *Exile* in a Foreign Land, than to be a Prisoner in

one's own Country. For alas! you know
one half of my Misery, if you are
convinc'd that I am both together; and
you judge of the Matter rightly, you
find that a thing, which seems very in-
sistent, is to be be found in me, which
be banish'd from the same Person by wh
I am kept a Prisoner. You will find
difficult to interpret this Riddle, u
you call to mind, that I have always
us'd to mingle a Dram of Love in my
ters. For, if as you say I am allow'd fo
Liberty here, of which I should be depri
in *France*, I beseech you let it be tha
assuring you, that there is a great deal
Passion mix'd with the Affection which
expres for your Service. I should indee
be ungrateful, if I should discover but
Ordinary Friendship for a Person who do
such Extraordinary Things for me, and
am obliged to fall in love at least with yo
Generosity. I have been acquainted wh
care a Gentleman and a Lady has taken
enquire of my Welfare, which is an add
tional Obligation to one whom they h
extreamly oblig'd before. For all the rest
they have seem'd buried in so profound a S
lence, that for six Months together I hav
heard not the least mention of them. Wh
ther this comes from their Forgetfulnes
fro

from their Prudence, I am unable to determine. Yet Forgetfulness may be allow'd an Excuse for Silence, but a dumb remembrance is without Defence. I leave you to conclude, Madam, how much Lustre this reflects upon what you have done for me, and how much I am oblig'd to you for a long Letter at a time, when others have been afraid to send me their Service. Therefore let me assure you, that tho' I am unable to make suitable returns to such Goodness, I esteem it at least, and extol it as it deserves, and that I am as much as a Man can possibly be,

*Madam,*

*Yours,* &c.

## To Monsieur de Chaudebonne.

I Writ to you ten or twelve days ago, and return'd you thanks for the two Letters, which I have at length received from you. If you were but sensible of the Satisfaction they brought with them, you would be sorry for not having writ to me oftner, and for not frequently repeating the Consolation, of which I had so much need. *Madrid* which is the agreeablest Place in the World, for those who at once are Lusty and Libertines, is the most Disconsolate, for those who are Regular, or those who are Indisposed. And in *Lent*, which is the Players Vacation, I do not know so much as one Pleasure that a Man can enjoy with Conscience. My Melancholly here and my want of Company have produc'd a good Effect in me; For they have reconcil'd me to Books, which I had for a time forsaken; and being able to meet with no other Pleasures, I have been forc'd

to Taste and to Relish that of Reading; Prepare then to see me a Philosopher as great as your self, and consider how fast a Man must come on, who for seven whole months has studied, or has been sick: For if one of the Chief Things that Philosophy aims at, is a Contempt of Life; the Stone *Colick* is certainly the best of Masters, and *Plato* and *Socrates* persuade us less efficaciously. It has lately read me a Lecture, that lasted seventeen Days, and which I shall not quickly forget; and which has often made me consider how very feeble we are, since three Grains of Sand, are sufficient to cast us down. But if it determines me to any Sect, it shall not at least be that which maintains that Pain is not an Evil; and that he who is Wise is at all times happy. But whatever befals me, I can neither be Happy nor Wise, without being near to you, and nothing can make me one or the other, so much as your Presence, or your Example. Yet am I very uncertain when I shall be able to leave this place, and expecting both Money and Men, which are coming by Sea, and which are two things that do not always keep touch with us, I apprehend my remaining here longer than I could wish: Therefore I make it my humble Request to you, that you would not forget

me to send us you have done, and that you would testifie by doing me the favour of Writing to me, that you are convinc'd of the real Affection with which

I am

Yours, &c.

## *To Monſieur de* Gordeau.

*Sir*,

YOU ought to give me time to recover our Tongue, before you oblige me to write to you. For it appears to me to be ſomething abſurd, that I, who have been now ſo long a Foreigner, and but juſt come from breathing the Air of *Barbary*, ſhould preſume to expoſe my Letters, to one of the moſt Eloquent Men in *France*. This conſideration has kept me ſilent till now. But thó I forbear to anſwer your Challenges, I cannot refuſe to return your Civilities. By theſe you have found a way to vanquiſh me, in ſpight of all my Evaſions: In my preſent condition it is more reputable to you, to Conquer me this way, than to overcome me by Force. You would have acquir'd but ſmall Glory by Vigorouſly Attacking a Man, who is already dr-

ven to Extreamity, and to whom Fortune has given so many Blows, that the least may satisfie to overwhelm him. Amidst the Darkness in which she hath plac'd us, we can have no defence; but here all our Art and our Skill in parring are useless. The case perhaps might be otherwise; if you had set before my Eyes the Sun of which you make mention; and as Dejected as you see me now, I should grow daring enough to enter the Lists against you, if the Light of that were divided between us Equally. 'Tis more to have that alone on your side, than all the rest of Heav'n. The Beauties which Sparkle in all that you do, are only deriv'd from hers, and it is the Influence of her Rays on you, which produces so many Flowers. Nothing can ever appear more Lively, than those which you scatter on every thing that comes from you. I have seen them upon the Ocean's extreamest Shores, and in places where Nature cannot produce, no, not one Blade of Grass. I have receiv'd Nosegays of them, which made me meet in Desarts, with the choicest Delicacies of *Greece* and of Fruitful *Italy*. And tho they had been carried four Hundred Leagues, neither the length of way, nor of time had in the least diminished their Lustre. They are indeed Immo-

tal and cannot Decay, and so vastly diffe-
rent from all Terrestrial Productions, that
that it is with a great deal of Justice, that
you have offer'd them up to Heaven; for
Altars alone are worthy of them. Believe
me, Sir, in what I am saying, I speak but
my real Sentiments; when my Curiosity,
as you say, had oblig'd me to pass the
Bounds of the Ancient World, to find out
Rare and Surprising Objects, your Works
were the wonderfullest things that I saw,
and *Africa* could show me nothing more
New, and no more Extraordinary sight.
Reading them under the Shade of its Palms,
I wish'd you Crown'd with them all, and
as the very time that I saw, that I had gone be-
yond *Hercules*, I found I came short of you.
All this, which was capable of producing
Envy in any Man's Soul but mine, fill'd
mine with so much Esteem and Affection,
that you then took the place there, which
you are now desiring, and perfectly finish'd
what you think you are still to begin. After
the knowledge which I have had of you,
how can I form such an Image of you, as
you are willing to give me? How can I
Fancy you to be that little Creature you
say you are? How could I Comprehend
that Heaven could place such mighty things
in so small a space? When I give my Ima-
gination

gination a loose, it gives you four yards at least, and Reproaches you all the Stories of Men engendred by Angels. Yet I shall be very glad to find that it is as you would have me believe. Amongst the rest of the Advantages, which I expect to derive from you, I am in hopes that you will bring our Stature into some Credit, and that it is ours which henceforward will be accounted the Noblest; and that by you we shall be Exalted above those who believe themselves higher than we. As we pour the most exquisite Essences into the smallest Bottles, Nature infuseth the Divinest Souls into the smallest Bodies, and mixes more or less of matter with them, as they have more or less in them of their Almighty Original. She seems to place the most Shining Souls, as Jewelers set the most Sparkling Stones, who make use of as little Gold as they can with them, and no more than just suffices to bind them. By you the World will be undeceiv'd of that foolish errour of valuing Men by their weight, and my littleness with which I have been so often upbraided by Madamoiselle *de Rambouillet*, for the future may recommend me to her. For what remains the Affection is very just, which you tell me, she has for you, and with her, it more

more of the Loveliest Creatures that illustrate the Light. But I wonder that you should think to get mine by such a discovery, and to gain it by the very means, which were sufficient to make you lose it. You had need to have a high opinion of my goodness, to believe that I can Love a Man who enjoys my Right, and who has obtain'd the Confiscation of my most valued Possessions. But yet I am so just, that even this shall be no Impediment, and I believe you to have so much Justice on your side, that I do not Despair but that we may accommodate ev'n this matter between us. They may very well have given you my place without your putting me out of it, and my room in their hearts was but very small, if it cannot contain us both. As for my part, I shall do my utmost, that I may not incommode you there; and shall take care to so take up my Station so that we may not clash; since so powerful an Interest cannot make me cease to be yours, you may believe, that in spight of the worst of Accidents, I shall be Eternally

*Yours*, &c.

BILLET

# BILLET

*From Madam* de Saintot, *to Monsieur* De Voiture.

I Have promis'd to bestow you, for a Gallant, upon two Sine Women, my Friends. I am confident that you will not find the Exploit too many for you, and do not doubt but that you will confirm my Promise as soon as you have but seen them.

The

## *The Answer of Monsieur* De Voiture.

LET me see what I Love as soon as you can tell me with Patience till that happy Moment. And since at your Command I have fallen in Love, it may behove you to take some care that I am beloved too. I have thought all Night upon the two Ladies that are in short upon you know whom. I write this *Billet* to one of them. Deliver it, I beseech you to her whom you believe that I love the most passionately of the two. In acknowledgment of the good Offices which I receive from you, I assure you, that you shall always dispose of my Affections; and that I will never love any one so much as your self, till I am convinc'd that you have no good earnest and mind that I should.

## To his Unknown Mistress.

WAS there ever so Extraordinary a Passion, as that which I have for you? For my part, I do not know any thing of you; and to my knowledge I never so much as heard of you. And yet, Gad, I am desperately in Love with you; and it is now a whole Day, since I have Sigh'd and look'd Silly, and Languish'd, and Dy'd, and all that for you. Without having ever seen your Face, I am taken with its Beauty; and am charm'd with your Wit, tho' I never have heard one Syllable of it. I am ravish'd with your every Action, and I fancy in you a kind of I know not what, that makes me passionately in Love with I know not whom. Sometimes I fancy you Fair, and at other times Black. Now you appear Tall to me, by and by Short; Now with a Nose of the Roman Shape, and anon with a Nose turn'd up. But in what ever

ever form I describe you, you appear the Loveliest of Creatures to me; and though I am ignorant what sort of Beauty yours is, I am ready to pawn my Soul, that it is the most Bewitching of all of them. If it be your Luck to know me as little, and to Love me as much, then thanks be to Love, and the Stars. But lest you should a little impose upon your self, in fancying me a Tall Fair Fellow, and so be surpriz'd at the Sight of me, I care not for once, if I venture to send you my Picture: My Stature is three Inches below the Middle one; My Head appears tolerable enough, and is decently fat off with a large Grey Head of Hair: Then with Eyes that languish a little, yet are something Hagard, I have a sort of a Cudden cast of a Face. But in recital one of your Friends will tell you, that I am the handsomest Fellow in the World, and that for Loving Faithfully in five or six Places at a time, there is no Man alive comes near me. If you think that all this will accommodate you, it shall be at your Service as soon as I see you. Till that long long'd for time I shall think of you; that is, if I know not whom. But if any one should chance to ask me for whom I sigh, don't be afraid, I warrant I keep the Secret; I would fain see any one catch me at naming you to him.

To

## To Mademoiselle Paulet.

*Madam,*

THere was only one thing wanting to your Adventures, and that was to be a Prisoner of State; I have given you the happy Occasion of being such. No one, who has omitted no Opportunity of bringing you into Play, will in all probability make her advantage of this. I know very well that I bring you into danger by writing to you; Yet cannot even that Reflection restrain me. From which you may conclude, that there is no thing which I would refuse to run, to refresh your remembrance of me, since I can owe to endanger even you, you who are Dear and Valuable above all the rest of the World to me. I tell you this, Madam, a time, when I would not lye, no not in Complement. For I would have you to know, that I am much the better for the Distemper which I have lately had. It has caused me to assume such good Resolutions, that if I had them not, I could be content

to purchase them with all my Health. I plainly foresee, that this will but divert you, you who are Conscious to so much of my Weakness; and who will never believe that I can keep single Resolutions, I who have broken so many Vows; yet nothing is more certain than that I have hitherto beheld the Spanish Beauties with as much Indifference, as I did the Flemish at *Brussels*; and I hope to grow a Convert in the very Place of the World in which the Tempter is strongest, and where the Devil resumes as glorious Shapes as what he put off when he fell. The Reformation is so great in me, that I have but one Scruple remaining, which is, that I think too often of you; and that I desire to see you again with a little too much Impatience. I who have moderated the rest of my Passions, have been unable to reduce that which I have for you, to the Measure with which we are permitted to love our Neighbours; that is to say, as much as we do our selves; and I fear you have a larger share in my Soul, than ought to allow a Creature. Look out I beseech you for a Remedy for this, or rather for an Excuse for it: For as for a Remedy, I believe there is none, and that I must be always with utmost Passion,

*Madam,*
*Yours.*

## TO THE
## *Marchioness of* Rambouillet.

### *In Answer to a Letter of Thanks of hers.*

*Madam,*

THO my Liberality should, as you tell me, surpass the Bounty of *Alexander*, it would nevertheless be richly recompens'd, by the Thanks which you have return'd me for it. He himself, as boundless as his Ambition was, would have confin'd it to so rare a Favour. He would have set more value upon this Honour, than he did on the *Persian* Diadem; and he would never have envied *Achilles* the Praise which he receiv'd from *Homer*, if he could but himself have obtain'd Yours. Thus, Madam, on this Pinnacle of Glory on which I stand, if I bear any Envy to his, 'tis not so much

to

o that which he acquir'd himself, as to that which you have bestow'd upon him, and he has received no Honours, which I do not hold Inferior to mine, unless it be that which you did him, when you declar'd him your Gallant. Neither his Vanity, nor the rest of his Flatterers, could ever persuade him to believe any thing that was so advantageous to him, and the Quality of Son of *Jupiter Hammon*, was by much less glorious to him than this. But if any thing comforts me for the Jelousie which it has rais'd in me, 'tis this, Madam, that knowing you as well as I know you, I am very well assur'd, that if you have done him this Honour, 'tis not so much upon the account of his having been the greatest of Mankind, as of his having been now these two thousand years no more. However, we here find cause to admire the Greatness of his Fortune, which not being able yet to forsake him so many years after his Death, has added to his Conquests a Person that gives them more Lustre than the Daughters and Wife of *Darius*; and which has gain'd him a Mind more great than the World he Conquer'd. I ought here to be afraid, after your Example of Writing, in too lofty a Style. But how can the Writer be too sublime who writes of you, and of *Alexander*? I humbly beseech you, Ma-

dam, to believe that I have equal Paſſion for you, with that which you ſhew for him; and that the Admiration of your Virtues will oblige me to be always,

*Madam,*

*Yours, &c.*

# *An Imitation of Monſieur* De Voiture's *Letter to Mademoiſelle* De Rambouillet.

*Being an Anſwer to that by which ſhe had inform'd him, who was then with* Monſieur *in Exile, that the Academy deſigned to aboliſh the Particle* Car. [For.]

*That the Reader may be diverted with this Letter, he is deſir'd to ſuppoſe, that there is a Club of* Wits *erected in* London, *for the Regulation of the Tongue, who have a Deſign to aboliſh* [For.]

*Madam,*

FOR, being of ſo great Importance in our Tongue as it is, I extreamly approve of the Reſentment you ſhew for the Wrong they deſign to do it; and I muſt needs declare, that I expect no good from

this Club of Wits, which you mention, since they are resolved to establish themselves by so great an Oppression. Even at at a time like this, when *Fortune* is acting her Tragedies throughout all *Europe*. I can behold nothing so deserving of Pity, as when I see they are ready to Arraign and to Banish a Word, which has so faithfully serv'd this Monarchy, and which amidst all our English Confusions, has always been of the side of those who were truly English. For my part, I cannot for my heart comprehend, what reason they can alledge against a Word, whose only business is to go before Reason, and which has no other Employment than to usher it in. I cannot imagine what Interest can oblige them, to take away that which belongs to *For*, to give it to *Because that*, nor why they have a Mind, to say with three Syllables, that which they say with three Letters. That which I am afraid of, Madam, is this, that after they have been guilty of this one Injustice, they will not scruple at more; perhaps they may have the Impudence to attack *But*, and who knows if *If* may be any longer secure. So that, after they have depriv'd us of all those words, whose business it is to bring others together, the Wits will reduce us to the Language of Angels

or, if they cannot do that, they will at least oblige us, to speak only by Signs: And here I must confess, that your Observation is true, *viz.* That no Example can more clearly shew us the Instability of Humane Affairs. He who had told me some Years ago, that I should have outliv'd *Fox*, I had thought had promis'd me a longer Life than the Patriarchs. And yet we see that after he has maintain'd himself for some hundreds of years, in full Force and Authority, after he has been employ'd in the most Important Treaties, and has assisted in the Councils of our Kings with Honour, he is all of a Sudden fallen into Disgrace, and threatned with a Violent end. I now expect nothing less, than to be terrify'd with lamentable Crys in the Air, declaring to the World, that the great *Fox* is Dead: For the Death of the Great *Cæsar*, or of the Great *Pan*, was, in my mind, less Important. I know if we consult one of the finest Wits of the Age, and one whom I esteem with Passion, he will tell us, that 'tis our Duty to condemn an Innovation like this, that we ought to use the *Fox* of our Fathers, as well as their Sun and their Soul, and that we should by no means banish a Word, which was in the Mouths of our *Edwards* and of our *Henrys*. But

you, Madam, are the Person, who are principally oblig'd to undertake his Protection. For since the Supreme Grace, and the Sovereign Beauty of the English Tongue lies in yours, you ought to command here with an Absolute Sway, and with a Smile or a Frown, give Life or give Death to Syllables, as uncontrould as you do to Men. For this I believe you have already secur'd it, from the imminent Danger which threatned it, and by vouchsafing it a Place in your Letter, have fix'd it in a Sanctuary and a Mansion of Glory, to which neither Envy nor Time can reach. But here, Madam, I beg leave to assure you, that I could not but be surpriz'd to see how Fantastick your Favours are, I could not but think it strange, that you, who without Compassion could see a Thousand Lovers expire, should not have the Heart to see a Syllable die. If you had but had half the Care of me, which you have shewn of *Vo*, I should then have been happy in spight of ill Fortune: Then Poverty, Exile, and Grief, would scarce have had force to come near me. If you had not deliver'd me from these Evils themselves, you had freed me at least from the Sense of them. But at a Time that I expected to receive consolation from yours, I found that your kindness

was only design'd to *For*, and that his Banishment troubled you more than ours. I must confess, Madam, it is but just, you should undertake his Defence; but you ought to have taken some care of me too, that People might not Object to you, that you forsake your Friends for a Word. You make no Answer at all to that which I writ about; you take not the least Notice of that which so much concerns me: In three or four Pages you scarce remember me once, and the Reason of this is *For*. Be pleased to consider me a little more for the Future, and when you undertake the Defence of the Afflicted, remember that I am of the Number. I shall always make use of him himself to oblige you to grant me this Favour, and to convince you that it is but my Due.

For,

I am, &c.

## To the Duke of Enguien, upon his Taking of DUNKIRK.

I Am so far from wondring that you have taken *Dunkirk*, that I believe you could take the Moon by the Teeth, if you did but once attempt it. Nothing can be impossible to you; I am only uneasie about what I shall say to your Highness on this occasion, and am thinking by what extraordinary terms I may bring you to reach my Conceptions of you. Indeed, my Lord, in that Height of Glory, to which you have now attain'd, the Honour of your Favour is a singular Happiness, but it is a troublesome thing to us Writers, who are obliged to Congratulate you upon every good Success, to be perpetually upon the Hunt for words whose Force may answer your Actions, and to be ev'ry day inventing of new

Pane-

Panegyricks. If you would but have the Goodneſs to ſuffer your ſelf to be beat ſometime, or to riſe from before ſome Town, the variety of the matter might help to ſupport us, and we ſhould find out ſome fine thing or other to ſay to you, upon the inconſtancy of Fortune, and the Glory that is gotten by beating her Malice bravely. But having, from the very firſt of your Actions, Rank'd you Equal with Alexander, and finding you riſing upon us continually; upon my word, my Lord, we are at a loſs what to do, either with you or our ſelves. Nothing that we can ſay, can come up to that which you do, and the very Flights of our Fancy flag Below you. Eloquence, which Magnifies ſmalleſt things, cannot reach the height of thoſe which you do, no, not by its boldeſt Figures. And that which is call'd Hyperbole on other occaſions, is but a cold way of ſpeaking when it comes to be applyed to you. Indeed it is different to Comprehend, how your Highneſs each Summer has ſtill found out meanes to Augment that Glory, which every Winter ſeem'd at its full Perfection; and that having begun ſo greatly, and gone on more greatly, ſtill your laſt Actions ſhould Crown the reſt, and be found the moſt Amazing. For my own part, my

Lord,

Lord, I congratulate your Success, as I am in Duty oblig'd, but I plainly foresee, the very thing that Augments your Reputation with us, may prejudice that which you expect from after Ages; and that so many Great and Important Actions, done in so short a space, may render your life incredible to future times, and make your History be thought a Romance by Posterity. Be pleas'd then, my Lord, to set some Bounds to your Victories, if it be only to accommodate your self to the Capacity of Human Reason, and not to go further than Common Belief can follow you. Be contented to be quiet and secure, at least for a time, and suffer *France* which is Eternally alarm'd for your safety, to enjoy Serenely, for a few Months, the Glory which you have acquir'd for her. In the mean time, I Beseech you to believe, that among so many Millions of Men who Admire you, and who continually pray for you, there is not one who does it, with so much Joy, with so much Zeal and Veneration, as I, who am,

*My Lord,*

*Your Highnesses, &c.*

To

## To the Duke of Enguien (Afterwards the Great Prince of CONDE) Upon his gaining the Battle of ROCROY.

*My Lord,*

AT a time that I am so far remov'd from your Highness, that you cannot possibly lay your Commands upon me, I am fully resolv'd to speak freely my Mind to you, which I have so long been oblig'd to disguise, lest it should bring me into the same Inconvenience, with those, who before me, have taken the like Liberties with you. But let me tell you, My Lord, you have done too much, to let it pass without taking notice of it; and you are unreasonable if you think to behave your self as you do, without being loudly told of it.

If

If you did but know how ſtrangely all *Paris* talks of you, I am very confident that you would be aſham'd of it; and you could not without confuſion hear, with how little Reſpect, and how little Fear of *Diſpleaſing* you, all the World preſumes to diſcourſe of what you have done. I muſt confeſs, my Lord, I wonder what you could mean: You have ſhewn your ſelf bold with a Vengeance, and Violent to the laſt Degree, in putting ſuch an Affront upon two or three old Captains, whom you ought to have Reſpected, if it had been only for their Antiquity. In killing the poor Count *de la Fountaine*, who was the very beſt Man in the *Low-Countrys*; In taking ſixteen pieces of Cannon, the proper Goods of the King's Uncle, and the Queen's own Brother; and in Confounding the *Spaniſh* Troops, after they had ſhewn ſo much goodneſs in letting you paſs. I heard indeed, you are Obſtinate as a Devil, and that it was not to much purpoſe to Diſpute about any thing with you. But yet I never thought, that your heat would have tranſported you ſo far. If you go on at the Rate you have begun, you will ſhortly grow Intollerable I aſſure you, to all *Europe*, and neither the *Emperor* nor the King of *Spain*, will either of them be able to endure

dare you. But now, my Lord, laying the Man of Conscience aside, and Resuming the Man of State, I Felicitate your Highness for the Victory I hear you have gain'd, the most Compleat, and the most Important, which has happen'd in our Age. *France*, which you have shelter'd from all the Storms that it Dreaded, is amaz'd to see that you have begun your Life with an Action, with which *Cæsar* would gladly have Crown'd his own, and which alone, reflects more Luster upon the Kings your Progenitors, than all theirs have transferred to you. Well, my Lord, you have Verified what has been formerly said, that Virtue comes to the *Cæsars* preventing Time. For you who are a true *Cæsar* both in Wit and in Knowledge; *Cæsar* in Diligence and in Vigilance; in Courage *Cæsar*, and *per omnes Casus Cæsar*; you have outrun the hopes, and surpass'd the Expectation of Men; you have clearly shewn that Experience is necessary to none but Ordinary Souls, that the Virtue of Heroes comes by a more Compendious way, and that the Works of Heaven are finish'd when but begun. After this I leave you to Judge, how you are like to be Receiv'd and Caress'd by the Lords of the Court, and with what pleasure the Ladies heard, that he whom

whom they had seen Triumphant in Balls, had been Victorious in Armies; and that the fineſt Head of all *France*, was likewiſe the Beſt and the Strongeſt. There is not a Man, ev'n to Monſieur *Beaumont*, who does not Declaim in your Praiſe. They who had revolted againſt you, are now reduced, and they who complain'd that you were always laughing, have been forced to confeſs, that you have ſhown your ſelf now in good earneſt; and ev'ry one's afraid of being of the Number of your Enemies, ſince you have defeated ſuch Multitudes of them. Pardon O *Ceſar* the Liberty which I have taken; Receive the Praiſe that is due to you, and permit us to Render to *Ceſar*, that which is due to *Ceſar*.

## To Monſieur de Balzac.

Sir,

IF it be true that I have always kept the first Rank, which you tell me I have held in your Memory. Methinks you have ſhewn but an indifferent concern for my Satisfaction, in delaying ſo long to impart the pleaſing News to me, and in ſuffering me ſo long to be the Happieſt of Men, without Dreaming I was ſo. But perhaps you were of opinion that this very good Fortune, was ſo infinitely above any thing that I could in reaſon hope for, that it was neceſſary you ſhould take time to invent Arguments, which might render it credible, and that you had an occaſion to em-

ploy all the power of Rhetorick to perſwade me, that you had not forgot me. And thus far at leaſt I muſt needs confeſs, that you have been very juſt, that reſolving to let me have nothing but words for all the Affection you owe me, the Choice which you have made of them, has been ſo Rich, and ſo Beautiful, that let me die if I believe the thing they aſſure me of would be of greater value. This at leaſt I am ſure of, that they would ſuffice to Counterballance any Friendſhip but mine. I am only Diſcontented at one thing, and that is, that ſo much Artifice and ſo much Eloquence, ſhould not be able to Diſguiſe the Truth from me, and that in this, I ſhould reſemble your own Shepherdeſſes, who are too ſilly to be Beguiled by a Man of Wit. But indeed, you muſt excuſe me if I am ſomething inclin'd to ſuſpect an Art, which could invent commendations for a Quartan-Ague, and an Art which you have at more Command than ever Man had before you. All thoſe Graces, and that Air of the Court, which I ſo much admire in yours, Convince me rather of the Excellence of your Wit, then of the goodneſs of your Will. And from all the fine things which you have ſaid in my Favours, all that I can conclude, ev'n when I am inclin'd to flatter my ſelf, is,

that

that Fortune has been pleas'd to give me a place in your Dreams. Nay, I know not if the very Extravagancies of a Soul so Exalted as yours, are not too Serious, and too Reasonable, to Descend so low as to me. And I shall esteem my self too obligingly us'd by you, if you have but so much as Dreamt that you Love me. For to imagine, that you have reserv'd a place for me amidst those Sublime thoughts, which are at present employed, in recompensing the Virtues of all the World, and distributing Shares of Glory to Mankind, to imagine this would be extream presumption in me. I have too great an opinion of your Understanding, to believe that you could be Guilty of any thing that is so much below you, and I should be unwilling, that your Enemies should have that to object to you. I am perfectly satisfied, that the only Affection which you can have justly for any one, is that which you owe to your self; and that Precept of Studying ones self, which is a Lesson of Humility to all besides you, ought to have a contrary Effect in Relation to you, and oblige you to Contemn, whatever you find without you. And therefore here let me swear to you, that without pretending to any share in your Affecti-

on, I should have been very well satisfied, if you had preserv'd with never so little care, the Friendship which I have vowed Eternally to have for you, and to have placed it if not amongst the things which you value, at least amongst those which you are not forward to lose. But in leaving me here with that lovely Rival, of whom you made mention of in yours, you have shewn, let me tell you, too little Jealousie, and you have suffer'd her to gain so much Advantage of you, that I have Reason to suspect that you have Conspir'd with her, to do me a mischief. And therefore I have more Reason than you to Complain, that she has enrich'd your self by your Losses, and that you have suffer'd her to get into her power, that which I thought to have secur'd from her Tyranny, by entrusting it in your hands. If you had been willing to have made never so little defence, the better part of my self, had yet been our own, but you by your negligence have suffer'd her to surprise it, and to Advance her Conquests at such a rate over me, that tho I shou'd surrender to you, all that remains of me, you would not have so much as one half of that which you have lost. Nevertheless, let me assure you, that you

have

have gain'd in my Eſteem, as much as you have loſt in my Affection, and that at the very time that I was beginning to Love you leſs, I was forced to Honour you more. I have ſeen nothing of yours ſince your Departure, which does not go beyond all that you had done before. And by your laſt works, you have the Honour of Excelling him who ſurpaſs'd all others. It cannot therefore but appear ſtrange, that when you have ſo much Reaſon to be contented, you ſhould yet be complaining, and that you your ſelf, ſhould be the only great Man who remains diſſatisfied with you. At preſent all *France* is liſtening to you, and you are indifferent to no Man who has but Learnt to Read. All who are concern'd for the Honour of their Countrey, are not more inquiſitive, after what the Mareſchal *de Crequi* is doing, than they are after what is doing by you. And you are the Perſon who can make more Noiſe in your Solitude, than the moſt Happy and moſt Renown'd of our Generals, at the Head of Forty Thouſand Men. Can you wonder then, that with ſo much Glory, you ſhould be Obnoxious to Envy, and that the very ſame Judges with whom *Scipio* was Criminal, and who Condemn'd *Ariſtides* and *Socrates*,

ſhould not unanimouſly do Juſtice to your Deſert! The People can plead Preſcription for Hating the very Qualities which they Admire in any one. Every thing which Tranſcends 'em, they think Affronts 'em; and they can better bear with a Common Vice, than an Extraordinary Virtue. So that if that Law was in Force amongſt us, of Baniſhing the moſt powerful for Authority or Reputation, I make no doubt, but that you would ſtand the Mark of the Publick Envy, and I believe even Cardinal *Richlieu* would not run greater hazard. But, for God ſake, have a care of calling that your Misfortune, which is but that of the Age. And complain no more of the Injuſtice of Men, ſince all who have worth, are of your ſide, and that amongſt them, you have found a Friend, whom yet perhaps, you may loſe once more. At leaſt, I ſhall do my utmoſt to put you into a condition of doing ſo. For every Man's Darling Vanity, at preſent, is to be accounted yours. For my own part, I have always in ſo Publick a manner profeſs'd my ſelf ſo, that if through ill Fortune I ſhould not be able to Love you ſo much as I have done, yet here let me Swear to you, that you ſhall be the only Man to whom I will dare to declare

it,

it, and that I will always own my self to the rest of the World, to be as much as ever,

*Yours*, &c.

## *To the Marquis of* Piſani;

*Who had loſt all his Money and his Baggage, at the Siege of* Thionville.

*The Character of the Marquis of* Piſani, *was a Man of Honour, Generoſity, and Courage; but an Extravagant, Ignorant, Obſtinate, Diſputing Gameſter.*

Sir,

THE Man would be to blame, or I have been very much mis-inform'd, who ſhould upbraid you with having had the Mules to keep, at your Camp of *Thionville*. The Devil a Mule have you kept there Sir.

Sir. They tell me, that upon the weighty Conſideration, that ſeveral Armies have been formerly loſt by their Baggage; you have made all poſſible haſte to be diſencumber'd of yours. And that having often read in the Roman Hiſtories, (this it is to be ſuch a Man of Reading, look you) that the greateſt Exploits that were done by their Cavalry, were done on Foot, after having voluntarily diſmounted in the Extreamity of the moſt doubtful Battels, you took a Reſolution to diſpatch away all your Horſes, and have manag'd matters ſo ſwimmingly, that you have not ſo much as one left. And now, *the Important Perſon ſtands on his own Legs.*

Perhaps, you may receive ſome ſmall Inconvenience from this. But let me die, if it be not much for your honour, that you as well as *Bias*, honeſt Old *Bias*, I warrant you know him ſo wondrous well, ſhould be able to ſay, that you carry all that is yours about you. No great Quantity I muſt confeſs of Foppiſh Accoutrements, nor a long Train of Led-Horſes, nor abundance of that which they call the Ready; but Probity, Generoſity, Magnanimity, Conſtancy in Dangers, Obſtinacy in Diſputes, a Contempt of all Foreign Languages, Ignorance of Falſe Dice, and a ſurpriſing

Tran-

Tranquillity upon the Loſs of Tranſitory Things. Qualities, Sir, which are properly and Eſſentially yours; and of which neither Time nor Fortune can ever deprive you. Now as *Euripides*, who was, as you know, or as you know not, one of the Graveſt Authors of *Greece*, writes in one of his Tragedies, that Money was one of the Evils, and one of the moſt pernicious ones, that flew from *Pandora*'s Box, I admire as a Divine quality in you; the incompatibility which you ſhew for it, and look upon it to be a diſtinguiſhing Mark, of a Great and Extraordinary Soul, that you are uneaſie till you are rid of this Corrupter of Reaſon, this Pois'ner of Souls, this Author of ſo much Diſorder, of ſo much Injuſtice, and of ſo many Violences. Yet, I could heartily wiſh, that your Virtue were not arriv'd at ſuch an extraordi- Pitch, and that you could be brought to ſome accomodation with this Enemy of Humane kind, and that you might be perſuaded to make Peace with it, as we do with the Great Turk, for Politick Reaſons, and the Advantage of Commerce. Now upon Conſideration, that it is a Difficult matter to be much at one's eaſe without it, and fancying that as I play'd for you at *Narbonne*, you threw for me at *Thionville*; and

that

that it is perhaps in my Name, that you have pack'd off your Baggage; I here ſend you a Hundred Piſtols at preſent in part of Payment; and that theſe may not meet with the ſame Fate which befell their Predeceſſors, I deſire you not to defile your Hands with them, but to deliver them to the French Gentlemen who are with you, for whoſe ſake I chiefly remit them.

*I am*, &c.

M.

*Colonel*

*This Letter ought to have been amongst the Original Letters.*

## *Colonel* D. *to my Lady* D.

### *Written in the beginning of King* James *his Reign.*

*Madam,*

THo your laſt was extreamly Obliging, yet the Praiſes which you ſo handſomely gave me, did not ſo much prove my Merit, as ſhew your own. Your praiſe of my imaginary Virtues declar'd but my want of real ones. For the Politeneſs of your Letter made me ſo ſenſible of the Defects of mine; that at the ſame time that it loaded me with Praiſe, it cover'd me with Shame. And therefore, *Madam*, let me tell you again, that in what I ſaid of you, I was not Generous but Juſt: And here you have driven me upon a tender Point, *viz.* of Derogating from my own Praiſes, and detracting from that Action which you impute

pute to me as an extraordinary Virtue. But I hope you will be convinced, that the Air of the Court has not yet blasted my Native sincerity, nor giv'n me Gallantry at the Expence of Truth, since I have the Rudeness to contradict you. The Repetition of your invitation, more than makes amends for the Coldness of my Brothers: But at the same time that it obliges it troubles me to think that I cannot accept of it. I passionately love the Country; but cannot possibly come thither, thô both the Spring and your self invite me. Methinks the Vilest Insect which Nature has lodg'd in the Fields, is in a more desirable State than we are, whom our Employment chains to the Town. The very Serpent still remains in that Paradise out of which it has cast us; For if it had not been for the Deceit of the First Serpent, there had been neither Soldier nor City. Thus you see, Madam, to what a Condition my Unhappy Circumstances reduce me; *viz.* of envying a Creature which Humane Nature abhors: For that about this time can leave its Hole, to lye basking on Sunny and Flowry Banks, and throwing off its Old one can assume a Coat as fresh and gay as the Season. But I must despair of getting out of the Town, and my old Honourable Livery

very, (which I hate yet more) to enjoy a free Air, and as free a Proſpect: So that I almoſt eſteem it a Bleſſing to be drawn out ſome times to *Hide-Park*, for the Diverſion of the King and the Rabble. But here I am ſenſible I have err'd in indulging Thoughts and Expreſſions, purely Poetical. Yet ſince my Subject requir'd it, I am confident you cannot but Pardon me. For to ſpeak as one ſhould do, who muſt not ſpeak in extraordinary terms of the Country, of the Spring, and of you,

*I am*

*Madam,*

*Yours, &c.*

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*FINIS.*

## ERRATA.

*Preface*, for *Invention* r. *Intention*. p. 1. for *Will Er—* r. *Will Ur—* p. 9. for *Extravagant blindness* r. *Extravagance. and blindness* p. 59. for *after having* r. *after she had*. p. 108 *do not close the Parenthesis till the full stop*. p. 109. for *Proceed* r. *Proceeded*.

# A Catalogue of Books lately Printed for *Samuel Briſcoe*, at the Corner of *Charles-ſtreet*, *Covent-Garden*.

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2. *The Young Lawyers Recreation*; *Being a Collection of ſeveral Pleſant Caſes in the Law, as for the Diverſion of the Reader.*

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